

FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Ara Coeli

An Essay in Mystical Theology

FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS OF
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

BY
ARTHUR CHANDLER

BISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN

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PREFACE

IT is a characteristic of our time that many rival and exclusive theories of religious knowledge are always making their appearance. Each theory tacitly or explicitly claims to occupy the whole ground, and to be *the* doctrine of Christian epistemology. And great is the confusion and perplexity which results. A man who has been living for years in the tranquil profession and practice of his religion wakes up one morning to hear himself, to his dismay, described as a "charcoal-burner," with the obvious implication that his faith is irrational and worthless. If he alleges in defence that he tries to listen to God's voice, and believes that he hears it speaking in his heart, and that therein he finds a justification for his religion, he finds himself labelled, either approvingly or contemptuously, as a Mystic and a Quietist. If he pleads that his faith verifies itself for him in the practical help which it gives him in times of trouble and perplexity, he learns that, without knowing it, he has been a Pragmatist and a Modernist all his life, and is doubtful whether this is to his credit or not. If

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in despair he goes back to the Gospel and declares that there at any rate is the sheet-anchor of his beliefs, he will be met by the curt inquiry whether by "the Gospel" he understands a system of "apocalyptic eschatology" or one of "ethico-religious prophecy." And by this time the unfortunate man hardly knows where he is, or whether he has any right to call himself a Christian at all.

This book is a protest against these militant exclusivenesses ; it is an attempt to weave together some of the main threads which go to form the fabric of religious knowledge. There are many such threads, of different shades and materials ; for religious knowledge is a rich, complex, many-coloured product. But the two main factors may be classified roughly as Faith and Experience. By Faith I mean the intellectual acceptance of certain rational principles and historical facts ; by Experience, the operation of a whole multitude of instincts, desires, and impulses which make up the affective and volitional nature. I have tried to show in some detail how religious knowledge results from the interaction of these two factors, and how an exclusive attention to either of them by itself means failure and disaster. It is not necessary here to anticipate the course of the argument ; in the last chapter I summarize the results arrived at.

But there is one important point on which I must say a few words here, in order not to be embarrassed

by it later. It is often stated that the immanence of God in man and nature is the truth which science is pressing most strongly upon us, and that the acceptance of this truth involves a radical readjustment of our theology and of our ideas on such matters as miracle, redemption, and inspiration or revelation. When God is seen to be continually working within us and within the ordinary course of nature and history, anything which suggests a violent interference with the customary modes of human action and the customary sequence of events will be discredited, and the continuity of God's work will be more highly esteemed than those so-called breaches of continuity on which we used to dwell with complacency.

Now, in dealing with this contention, it is all-important to find exactly what is meant by this belief in the immanence of God. It may mean that God's immanence is a truth not antagonistic but supplementary to the truth of His transcendence; as in the doctrine of the Trinity the immanence of the Spirit supplements the transcendence of the Eternal Father. Or it may mean that the conception of an immanent God is to oust altogether the idea of transcendence as an exploded and antiquated superstition.

In the former case, when the two ideas are held to supplement each other, it may be extremely useful to lay a strong emphasis at times on this divine immanence, as a protest against any sort of deistic

tendency to banish God from the world which He has made. We are reminded thereby that this world is God's world and is ruled by His laws; that the God who made it sustains and guides it every hour; that every effort after righteousness and every conquest of evil is a witness to the working of an indwelling Spirit; that every true and beautiful idea is a divine inspiration; that the causal nexus of events is as much a miracle of God's wisdom, and our daily preservation from death and disaster as much a miracle of His love, as any "miraculous" intervention in the order of things would be.

A contention of this sort, which is open to much rhetorical embellishment, may be most true and profitable, but it does not demand any startling or radical change in our beliefs; it merely shifts the emphasis from one side to the other, telling us that of the two truths about God one needs at present to be brought more prominently forward.

It will be useful for us to be reminded that any apparent exception to the laws of nature in the shape of miracle is due to the operation of the same moral and spiritual Power which ordinarily works through and by means of those natural laws. Incidentally this will involve a spiritual view of nature, not a naturalistic view of God. And there is no doubt that an unduly hard and crusted and irrational conception of the miraculous will be thereby corrected.

Again, it is indubitably well for us to remember

that the God who redeemed us by an external act of His own also enables us to appropriate the results of redemption by His immanence in our hearts ; and, further, that He who revealed Himself supremely and uniquely in His Son reveals Himself also in all the scattered rays of truth which illuminate the minds of men. There is nothing "radical" in such thoughts. But in the other case, when the immanence of God is understood in a sense which excludes and denies His transcendence altogether, when it is meant that God only acts, and can only act, through the usual operation of man's thoughts and volitions and through the usual operation of natural processes, then certainly something startling happens ; but what happens is not so much a radical change in our theological conceptions as rather the disappearance of theology altogether, there being no longer a God for it to deal with. The immanence of God becomes in this case a polite expression for the beauty and forcefulness of nature, human and otherwise. For instance, inspiration and revelation are not differently conceived, but at once ruled out, if there is nothing divine outside of man and the other products of nature, no higher plane from which a message can be conveyed to man. There is no sense in describing men's thoughts as inspirations if there is no divine source from which they can in any case possibly proceed. The expression *God immanent in man* will merely mean man *possessed of certain lofty capacities*, or more shortly *Man*.

The term *God* becomes quite otiose, just as unmeaning as it is at the opposite pole of Deism; for in the one case we have a God who is merged in man and cannot speak to him from without, and in the other a God who made man once for all and then leaves him absolutely to himself. In either case we can just strike out the term *God* and confine our attention to the human nature which, on either theory, is really independent of God.

Again, on this theory our conception of miracles will be, not modified but, destroyed. If God's action in nature is confined to the normal processes of nature, it is obviously impossible that He should, for any object or in any cause, contravene those processes; or rather it is impossible that He should ever know of any object different from those which nature actually pursues. And here again extremes meet. Miracles, which for Deism are practically inconceivable, as being an utterly unwarrantable "interference" on the part of an absentee deity, are only just a trifle more inconceivable for a theory which identifies God with nature. Instead of talking of God immanent in nature, it is simpler and better to talk about Nature, with a capital N to express its dignity and beauty.

Lastly, Redemption must go too. All man's efforts to improve himself, the turning of his will to worthy ends, and the strengthening of it to obtain them, may be nominally ascribed to the immanent working of

God ; but in fact God's action is confined to, and identified with, the ordinary operation of man's thought and volition. There will be no such thing possible as a divine deliverance of man from himself, a translation of him from a state of nature to a state of grace, a restoration to him of powers which he had lost and which he can only recover as a gift from God. Here the immanence of God will merely mean a mysterious capacity called free will, by which he works out his own salvation, or rather cultivates his own nature, as he can, without any assistance in the shape of forgiveness or sanctifying grace.

The immanence of God, then, if taken to exclude His transcendence, is an idea which becomes unmeaning on the smallest scrutiny. It merely expresses the notion that the various spheres in which God might be said to be immanent have a certain dignity and distinction, a fact which, as suggested above, might be just as well and more shortly expressed by the use of a capital letter.

But even this does not close the account. If God's relation to man is merely a relation of immanence, and if the immanence of God means merely the capacities which as a matter of fact man possesses, it will be quite illogical to confine the immanent working of God to the *right* use of those capacities. Not only good thoughts and true ideas, but also criminal thoughts and fallacious ideas, all have to be credited to the working of the immanent God. And so with

action. God will be working equally in the highest sublimity of human heroism and in the lowest depths of human rascality.

In fact, divine immanence by itself means pantheism, and pantheism cannot recognize moral distinctions without committing suicide.

Pantheism means just nature ; the all-mother, from whose womb come forth all things fair and foul, false and true, beautiful and ugly, good and bad. Thus an immanent God, who is not also transcendent, is, in the first place, no God at all ; and is, secondly, the impartial and indifferent source from which good and evil equally proceed.

The God whom a Christian claims to know, and the knowledge of whom is the subject of this essay, is a God who in Himself is above and beyond the world, is not in any way confined to its boundaries, nor indeed is bound to it by any bonds but those of love for that which He created ; to quote an old Latin hymn :—

*Intra cuncta, nec inclusus,
Extra cuncta, nec exclusus.*

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FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

THE ROOT OF RELIGION

ALL religion is based ultimately on the sense of an affinity between the soul and God.

God, as involved in this most general conception, must not be understood as the God of the Church or of theology. So far, He is an unknown God, to whom the soul is yet impelled, by a mysterious sense of His relationship to her, to build altars and offer prayers of yearning adoration. This affinity is expressed in the Bible in the statement that man is made by God in His own image; and the corollary is given by S. Augustine, that since He has made us for Himself, therefore our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. This restlessness is a familiar fact of experience; in fact, the idea of God with which we are dealing is simply the feeling of an instinct of attraction and repulsion, an instinct which draws us towards an unknown something, and in so doing causes us to turn away in disgust from everything which is not *that*, or not essentially bound up with *that*. It is, for Plato, the instinctive pursuit of the

good, a pursuit in which the soul is beset by perplexity and ignorance, and yet a pursuit which must be carried through to the end, if life is to be worth living at all ; since things just and beautiful, and so forth, will have worthless guardians of themselves in men who do not grasp their connexion with the good.¹

This instinctive desire for God is thus a disquieting force, which refuses to allow us to rest until the idea has been realized, proved, substantiated. It is a riddle to which we must find an answer ; otherwise it will be continually haunting our mind, and will prevent our giving attention to, or being interested in, anything else. The restlessness and dissatisfaction which characterize life to-day are just a sign that this volcanic idea of God is at work, producing disquiet everywhere, often without arriving at a coherent and satisfying expression of itself. Because the goods of life are not viewed in their derivation from the Good, they come to be, one after the other, neglected and despised ; and the Good remains shrouded in obscurity.

And this instinctive desire, which is the root of religion, expresses itself differently in accordance with men's temperament and training. In happy, expansive natures it tends in the direction of pantheism. God must be found, such people agree, if life is to be anything but a failure ; but it is not hard to find Him ; He is not far away, but about and around us ; He is everywhere ; nay, He is everything ; whenever we open our mouth and draw in our breath, we are inhaling God. God is the world ; good things have not to be painfully sought in God, or derived from God ; they are God ; they, and ourselves, are so

¹ Plato, *Rep.*, p. 505.

many parts and parcels of the Deity. It is true that man's conscience, together with a certain recalcitrant sense of humour, prevents him from acquiescing readily in this facile theory. He feels that, if he and other things are really God, God must be capable of considerable improvement; and accordingly he links pantheism to evolution, and conceives of a great world-process in which God (including himself and other items) grows and is perfected through the lapse of ages.

On the other hand, people of a gloomy and severe disposition recoil from this easy process of self-deification. God, they feel, is transcendent; He is very unlike them; very far off, and unapproachable in holiness. If He is to be attained at all, it will only be after a rigorous discipline undergone by themselves, in which many tribulations will have been endured, and many temptations vanquished; and the attainment will be not in this order of things, but in a far-off heaven.

Now it will be noticed that both these theories, however opposed in other respects, agree in accepting the idea of a development, a process or growth in the attainment of God (or in the life of God), and of a goal, where God will be perfectly attained, or completely self-revealed. In both cases the emphasis is on the future, on a perfection which is to be either in a transcendent, heavenly sphere, or in a remote stage of the present world.

But in contradistinction to this whole point of view we have the contention of theistic mysticism, which, without denying the realities of process and of goal, holds also that moments of attainment are possible at any stage of the development. It agrees

with the transcendentalists that God is utterly different from the world, and that the world in itself is worthless and contemptible ; and it agrees also with the pantheist that "spirit with spirit may meet," and that in such contact there is a union of the human and the divine. Thus mysticism, as one form which the instinctive desire for God assumes, is a curious blend of optimism and pessimism. The world, considered as a possible satisfaction of man's nature, is declared to be hopelessly inadequate ; being fragmentary, evanescent and ineffective, it cannot satisfy a demand for unity, eternity, and perfection. Man looks for something permanent : and the world is a ceaseless flux of becoming ; he looks for something with clear outlines and unity of design : and the world is a chaotic heap of incoherences ; he looks for an ideal perfection, an archetype for his own upward aspirations : and he sees in the world nothing but ineffectual struggle, arrested development, and death. And on the other hand, the visible order is transfigured for him with gleams of glory from another world ; it is charged with a meaning and a purpose not its own ; it whispers a spiritual secret, hints at a divine origin ; it presents itself, with all its confusions and failures, as a medium through which the spiritual world flashes its signals to our soul ; it justifies itself as being just a shadow, or reflection in the water, of "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." ¹ There we have the two main contentions of mysticism : first, that the world is nothing more than a shadow ; and, secondly, that it is a shadow of good things. In so far as it is only a shadow, it is an

¹ Heb. xi. 10.

object of contempt and derision ; no multiplication or interweaving of shadows can be anything but shadowy. If the world is wise, it will acquiesce in being a shadow ; if it tries to be anything else, it is always found out as a fraud and a delusion.

But because it is a shadow of that which is perfect, of that Being of whom the desire is planted in man's heart, it is invested with an inexhaustible significance and a beauty of infinite suggestiveness. As a shadow, it is empty and contemptible ; as a shadow of the spiritual world, it is glorious and delightful.

But it must be remembered that, in the eyes of the mystic, the glory and delight are not to be regarded as belonging to the world ; they descend upon it from elsewhere and are apt to be withdrawn. Their effect is not to rehabilitate the world, and to prove that it is not a bad place after all ; but rather to show that its only claim to worth or dignity lies in the fact that it points away from itself to that which is true and substantial. If at times other influences have combined to paint the world in brighter colours before men's eyes, and to commend it to them as a peaceful and satisfactory home, mysticism has certainly not been one of such counsellors. On the contrary, when such themes have lulled men into an easygoing acquiescence in the existing order of things, the mystical instinct has testified against them. Like a volcano in eruption, it has reduced such ideals to dust and ashes, and cast man forth as a houseless wanderer to find, elsewhere than on earth, an abiding satisfaction for his soul.

In any case, whether envisaged as mysticism or not,

the deep-rooted conviction of affinity with God acts as a gad-fly which drives men onwards in restlessness and discontent, whenever they try to pause and be satisfied with the world and its contents.

Somewhere else, whether in the final development of a world-process, or in a future transcendent world, or in present-day echoes and glimpses of such a world—somewhere else lie fruition and rest and satisfaction.

That is one work which the desire for God accomplishes, a negative, destructive work, a work of disillusionment. But it has, besides, a positive work ; it acts not only in the rejection of futile satisfactions, but in the pursuit and comprehension of what is true and adequate. Being a desire for God, its only satisfaction will be this knowledge and possession of God. And knowledge of God, answering this deep-rooted need of God, is the essence of all religion. The need and the knowledge, the need making us receptive of the knowledge and the knowledge deepening the sense of need, make up the development of religion.

We shall see, as we go on, that this knowledge of God is a complex thing ; that it requires an element of intellect or faith to act as a guide to the primitive instincts and desires. But in its earliest attempts to satisfy itself, the desire for God ignores the need of faith or creed.

It affirms itself blindly in ritual practices based on a crude sense of kinship with the Deity. In the next chapter we must glance at these primitive rites ; and alongside of much that is savage and repellent, we shall find a true principle embedded in them, namely, the principle of communion with God through sacrifice.

This principle presents itself in primitive religion as the satisfaction of a crude, untutored instinct, as a savage embodiment of religious experience. When enlightened and schooled by faith, it will be seen to yield the highest and most spiritual consummation of religious knowledge.

CHAPTER II

THE INSTINCT OF SACRIFICE ¹

IN the oldest Semitic sacrifices the blood and intestines of the victim were given to the god ; the rest furnished a sacrificial meal for the kinsmen who joined in common worship. The god and his worshippers held communion by partaking together of the flesh of the victim. And the act of thus sharing a common meal meant, in accordance with all primitive tradition, a recognition of mutual bonds and obligations. It meant that a man and his god stood in a covenant relation to each other ; that the god was pledged to help the clan and fight its battles, and that the clansmen were pledged to be loyal to their god, and also to be loyal to each other as members of a community which in its corporate capacity had a god as its head. In the early days when each village had its altar, any meal at which flesh was eaten was a sacrificial feast ; the kinsmen, who were also fellow-worshippers, celebrated it in common, and the god

¹ The guides to whom I am indebted for my facts in this chapter are Professor Robertson Smith (*The Religion of the Semites*) and Miss Harrison (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*).

had his appointed share. Thus every slaughter of an animal for food was a sacrifice, and at the festivities which followed the god and his people met together and renewed and ratified their bonds of union. This primitive religion, summed up and expressed, not in prayer or theology, but simply in the sacrificial feast, was obviously a homely, joyous, and even jovial affair, untroubled by perplexity or sense of sin. Probably the only thing conceived as sin would be dereliction of loyalty on the part of the kinsmen to each other, *e.g.*, failure to observe the primeval law of blood revenge when a member of the clan had been slain in some affray ; such failure being emphatically a *sin*, because duty to a kinsman was duty to the god who was the head of the community.

But, secondly, the victim, thus sacrificed and consumed, was not merely the means of uniting the god and his people together in the good-fellowship of a common banquet. The victim itself was sacred on its own account ; and the ground of its sanctity was the belief that it was itself akin both to the god and to his worshippers. This belief, which is so strange and startling to modern notions, seems to have lain at the very root of ancient sacrifice ; obviously it derives from a totemistic form of religion in which the community regards itself as descended from some sacred animal, which is at once its ancestor and its god.

But the matter of real moment is not the savage origin of the tradition, but the all-important fact that the worshippers, in eating the flesh of the victim,

believed that they were feeding on a divine life, and were thereby strengthening and renewing what we should call a sacramental union with their god. Thus the sacrificial banquet was not merely a pledge of man's loyalty to the god at whose table he feasted, but it had the yet simpler and deeper meaning that in eating a divine victim he became a partaker of the divine nature. No doubt this divine nature, and the effects of participation in it, were conceived in an uncouth and barbarous sense; but none the less we are face to face with the fact that both sacrifice and sacramental communion make up man's earliest conception of the content and meaning of religion.

In the third place, primitive religion had a piacular or atoning aspect. In a sense this aspect is implied in all sacrifice and communion. The feast of good-fellowship, which was also a sacrament of communion, was not only a pledge of continued loyalty to God but also the restoration and renewal of a loyalty which had been impaired. But, as Professor Robertson Smith points out,¹ the piacular side of sacrifice came naturally into greater prominence when God was conceived not as the ancestor of a special clan but as the patron whom men of other races approached as suppliants. Not being kinsmen of the god, these strangers could not ask his protection as a matter of natural right; they could only implore it as an uncovenanted mercy, appeasing him with atoning sacrifices, and coming into his presence with fear and trembling.

And there is no doubt that the growth of this idea,

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 75-8.

in which man thought of himself as the client or guest of a god upon whom he had no claim, signifies the growth of a wider, and therefore more spiritual, conception of the deity. The crude belief in his *physical* kinship with a special clan, a kinship expressed in the feast and strengthened in the communion, gradually gives way to a conception of him as independent of such carnal bonds, as a god to whom men are united not by a fact of physical descent but by the affinities of justice and righteousness, and whom they approach not with the easy familiarity of kinsmen but with reverence and awe and sacrifices of propitiation.

And a further result of this client-relationship to God is found in the *individualizing* of religion. In approaching God as a stranger and a foreigner, man comes as *himself* alone, not clothed in the rights and privileges of a chosen people, but in his own naked individuality. Amongst members of the clan individual dealings with the god were strongly discouraged, and indeed condemned as magical rites by means of which a man was trying to get behind his kinsmen, and to curry favour for himself in an unpatriotic and utterly reprehensible manner. But the stranger must perforce draw near as a solitary suppliant, pouring out the bitterness of his own heart, and offering a piacular sacrifice on behalf of his own individual safety.

Here, again, piacular offering was doubtless conceived in a somewhat barbarous sense; but the general fact remains that primitive religion, as expressed in the genius of the Semitic race, embodies itself in the three great conceptions of sacrifice, sacramental communion, and atonement.

We get much the same results from a consideration of the Greek religion. Here too the cultus of the gods consists essentially in sacrifice; and here too the forms and ceremonies of the sacrifice vary according as the underlying motive is joyful fellowship or terrified propitiation. The former motive governs the worship of the Olympian Gods, who share the sacrificial feast with their worshippers. Slices of the thigh of the slaughtered bull are wrapped in fat and burnt as an offering which may ascend as a sweet savour to the god; the rest is eaten at a sacred banquet by the people. Here we meet with the same spirit of festivity and good-fellowship, of freedom and familiarity with the gods, which existed also in the ordinary sacrificial feast of the Semites.

The flesh-eating Achæans probably brought this type of sacrifice with them from the North; it became the established cultus of the Olympians; and until a few years ago was regarded as the characteristic and universal type of Greek religion.

But the older Pelasgian race had a conception of religion very different from the sunny and breezy worship of Zeus or Apollo. Their sacrifices were made to the Chthonic or under-world gods, or to the ghosts of heroes who often grew into under-world gods and were commonly represented in the form of a snake. These sacrifices were holocausts, which were offered in the darkness of night, and of which the worshippers did not partake. The object of such sacrifice was the *placation* of angry or maleficent powers, or (what came to the same thing) the purification of the worshipper from a taint of evil. He has, perhaps,

committed murder, and the ghost of the victim cries out for vengeance.¹ So a victim is killed ; its blood is sprinkled on the guilty man, and then washed off him and poured into a trench, in order that it may filter through the earth and finally satisfy the thirst of the avenging spirit. Or, in some time of public calamity, the corporate guilt of the city is solemnly transferred to a human scapegoat (probably a condemned criminal), who is afterwards taken away and killed as a sin-offering in placation of an offended deity. Evil is obviously conceived here in a primitive, physical sense as something loose, detachable, and transferable, something that can be washed off or made over to some human or animal substitute. But what we have to note is that in this earlier form of Greek religion there is the same piacular or atoning sacrifice which we found among the Semites.

These two forms of Greek religion, the sacrificial feast of the Olympian Gods, where all is joy and sunshine and good-fellowship, and the gloomy nocturnal holocausts offered in fear and trembling to angry or avenging spirits, are to some extent reconciled and combined in the worship of Dionysus. Olympian *fellowship* and Chthonic *purification* issue in the mystical *communion* of the Orphic mysteries. In the cult of Dionysus we have Greek religion in its fullest, most living and concrete form. Dionysus is the principle of life at its intensest, of intoxication and ecstasy, of the orgiastic and impassioned side of human existence, of joys and sorrows raised to their highest power. He has a mysterious double birth,

¹ Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 60.

from the thigh of his father as well as from his thunder-stricken mother Semele. He is stolen, torn limb from limb, and devoured by the Titans, who in their turn are destroyed by the avenging thunderbolt of Zeus. His worshippers commemorate this by feasting on the raw flesh of a sacrificial bull, which represents the dismembered god, or rather is one of his manifold incarnations. As the god of life he appears sometimes as a tree (especially the vine), sometimes as an animal, sometimes as a man. As the principle of a life incessantly renewed, he is carried in procession as a child in his basket cradle, having been mystically reborn in the symbolic marriage ceremony of the mysteries. "Yearly, about the time of the shortest day, just as the light begins to increase, and while hope is still tremulously strung, the priestesses of Dionysus were wont to assemble with many lights at his shrine, and there with songs and dances awake the new-born child after his wintry sleep, waving in a sacred cradle, like the great basket used for winnowing corn, a symbolical image or perhaps a real infant."¹

The feasting on the flesh of Dionysus, as the bull-god, in order that his life may be assimilated by his worshippers, presents the third leading idea of primitive religion, the idea of sacramental communion.

In all these conceptions, fellowship with the gods, atonement or placation, and communion, the Greek sacrifices correspond, even to minute particulars, with those of the Semitic race. But it is to be observed that in this last conception the Greek goes even

¹ Pater, *Greek Studies*, pp. 38-9.

further than the Semite. The feeding upon the bull-god not only stimulates the corporate life of the group of worshippers and brings them into closer harmony with their god, but it actually deifies those who partake. The worshipper who "has fulfilled his red and bleeding feast," is himself freed from human limitations and becomes a Bacchus. "It is not hard to see," says Miss Harrison, "how this savage theory of communion would pass into a higher sacramentalism, into the faith that by partaking of an animal who was a divine vehicle you could enter spiritually into the divine life that had physically entered you, and so be made one with the god. It was the mission of Orphism to effect these mystical transitions." ¹

Thus in the worship of Dionysus we recognize a passionate hunger for life and immortality, a real religion which springs from real human yearnings and intuitions, and which smacks of the soil of its origin in its strange union of the playful and grotesque with a fierce and savage ecstasy. Compared to Dionysus, Apollo is a mere bloodless creation of poetical imagination, a statue that can never come to life.

The worship of Apollo corresponds to a cold and stately service of matins as rendered in an English Cathedral; that of Dionysus combines the profundity of a solemn Eucharist with the orgies of the Salvation Army.²

¹ P. 488.

² Miss Harrison aptly compares the "Evian women" (so-called from the cry "EVOI" used in Bacchic worship) with the "Hallelujah lasses" of to-day.

What we gather from the worship of the Semites and the Greeks (the two races of the world which have had the greatest natural instinct for religion) is that the religious instinct embodies itself, originally and naturally, not in theology or in formal prayers or in the imitation of a god, but in purification, sacrificial feasts, and communion; purification from a physical and transferable taint of evil, and sacrificial communion, a communion through the sacrificial feast, a communion which will bring out the divine element in man, and by a sort of physical possession will knit him into a closer union, even into an actual identity of nature, with his god.

The mixture of strength and weakness in such a position is obvious. Its weakness lies in the fact that both good and evil are conceived as merely physical, and are induced or averted by religious rites which are little more than magic. Whilst there is a real yearning after God and immortality, the quest for them is conducted principally through incantations and ceremonial; the heart is lifted up, but the will and intellect lag behind. On the other hand, there is no doubt that in identifying religion at once as the reception of a divine life, these ancient worshippers seized its essential and unchanging characteristic, and have much to teach the average Christian in this respect. Religion is with them a life of fellowship or union with God (a God who has many names but is divined to be ultimately one, the Father of man and nature)—a life in which they are made partakers of a divine nature, and therefore a life which can only be received as a gift from heaven.

The modes of preparation for it and reception of it are crudely conceived ; but we must remember that, when once religion is understood to be a life, and a life of union with God, both the life itself and its conditions will gradually come to be grasped in a purer and more spiritual sense ; moral and spiritual kinship will take the place of physical consanguinity ; it will be recognized (as it was by S. Paul) that the true children of Abraham are his spiritual children, whilst those who exult in the fleshly fact of their descent from him are a bastard and servile offspring of the bondmaid Hagar.

Thus religious life will on the one hand be moralized by the co-operation of man's will ; and on the other hand it will be cleared of irrelevances and focused on a definite and worthy object by the criticism exerted by his intelligence.

But if by some perverse fate religion had at the outset been considered to consist essentially either in morality or in speculation, it would probably have never risen to the conception of a divine life at all ; in fact, it would never have been religion in any real sense of the word ; it would merely have expressed the ethical or speculative experiments of unaided humanity. And in this connexion it is worthy of notice that the Greeks, who are so often taken as the embodiment of self-confident and rebellious intellect, have given the deepest possible expression to man's pitiful need of a divine help, which must be nothing less than the life of God within him.

Pater¹ well says of Dionysus : " A type of second

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

birth, from first to last, he opens in his series of annual changes, for minds on the look-out for it, the hope of a possible analogy between the resurrection of nature and something else, as yet unrealized, reserved for human souls; and the beautiful weeping creature, vexed by the wind, suffering, torn to pieces and rejuvenescent again at last, like a tender shoot of living green out of the hardness and stony darkness of the earth, becomes an emblem or ideal of chastening and purification, and of final victory through suffering."

But before the life in which religion consists can be spiritualized, it must be subject to a manifold course of discipline and development. In particular it must become more personal, and be the life of the whole man; it must not consist only in wild untutored feelings and intuitions; the mind and the will must be incorporated in it, and thereby strengthen and illuminate the stormy heart.

And in place of a mythology which is the poetical interpretation of a misread ritual, it must clothe itself in a theology based on historic facts.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSERVATION OF VALUES

THE root of religion is man's sense of his own affinity to God. We have seen how in primitive religion this instinct led men to conceive of God as, in a literal sense, their ancestor, or again as their patron or king, and to invite him to those sacrificial feasts which were the means of union between him and them, and in which they drew near to him with more or less of joy and confidence, and with more or less of diffidence and fear, in proportion to the closeness of their relation to him, and in proportion to their loyalty to the good of the clan over which he presided.

Obviously the whole conception was crude and unsatisfactory in positing a physical affinity, in which man's rational and spiritual nature remained, for the most part, untouched. It was inevitable that further reflection should effect many changes, and that, without deserting the fundamental idea of affinity, men should locate their affinity to God in their spiritual rather than in their physical nature.

The spiritual nature (taking the expression in its most general sense as equivalent to *immaterial* and

opposite to *bodily*) was found to consist in certain capacities of feeling and thought and volition; and it was in the possession of these capacities that man's affinity to God was held to consist. Not physical descent, but the possession of God-like capacities and powers was the bond of union, not procreation but creation was the explanation of this bond.

The belief that man was thus of like nature to the God who made him, and that in communion with God he can attain to the completion and perfection of his nature, has been the fruitful source of spiritual progress and aspiration. Theistic belief and moral endeavour have both been founded on this conception. It would be impossible to exaggerate its historical importance or its intrinsic worth.

Only, there has been a danger lest, in the recoil from the crudities of the older theory, its enduring element of truth should be ignored. That truth was, that religion is *life*, a divine life derived from God and received by man : a life wrongly conceived as physical, but rightly conceived as the bond of union between God and His worshippers.

Now, creation in the Divine likeness is not the same as infusion of the Divine life ; there was a tendency to regard God rather as the goal of man's capacities than as the indwelling life of his soul ; a tendency to substitute moral effort for spiritual life, and to think of God rather as the distant reward than as the present possession of the faithful.

The difference between these points of view is deep and far-reaching ; it is a difference of temperament as well as of teaching or tradition ; but the alternative conceptions really supplement each other, and the

richest and fullest religion will combine the "likeness to God," as an incentive to spiritual improvement, with the "life of God," as a fact of spiritual attainment.

How then does our spiritual endowment lead us to claim a likeness of nature with God, and to welcome any revelation which assures us that the likeness is a fact? It does this in two ways; in consequence of the character of the objects with which we deal, and of the constitution of ourselves who deal with them.

1. What I have called our spiritual endowment consists of certain capacities, intellectual and moral and æsthetic, by means of which we are aware of things as beautiful or good or true. Further, everything which we value or pursue is valued and pursued as coming under one or other of these conceptions. We have a faith in the reality of truth, goodness, and beauty; such faith in the inspiration of the scientist, the philanthropist, and the artist; without faith no progress or achievement would be possible in any one of these spheres.

For instance, science starts with a belief that there is order and coherence in the universe; this is at the beginning a mere instinct, which cannot be proved or justified, and which is only verified by results; but without it science could not move an inch. And the real difficulty and stumbling-block for science is not the difficulty of verifying such a belief, but the overwhelming abundance of verification. It asks, with some diffidence, for uniformity in the sequence of events in some sphere of hard material facts; it receives not only what it asked for, but

indications that this particular department of material fact is interconnected with countless other such departments ; and further, the boundary between material and immaterial melts and becomes fluid ; the familiar lines and landmarks are blurred and confused ; and at last an all-pervasive, sublimated, ethereal energy presents itself as the answer to the riddle of the universe.

The scientist asked for some measure of unity and regularity as the condition of success in his work, and to his intense bewilderment he is confronted with a unity which penetrates everywhere, an immaterial and spiritual unity which presents itself more and more forcibly as the output of a personal will. He is like Faust in his study listening to the Easter hymn of praise.

So again the philanthropist believes in a certain capacity for goodness in the "cases" with which he deals ; and apart from this faith would not be able to work for them at all. And to his bewildered eyes this capacity for goodness is revealed in a measure which exceeds his utmost hopes or power of conception. The teacher becomes a dazed and dumbfounded scholar ; he had asked for a small measure of respectability, and he contemplates a goodness which is growing into a very passion of love and self-sacrifice, a fragrant and unearthly sanctity which must either find its source or satisfaction in God, or must reduce this world to a nightmare of baffled hopes and unrealized capacities. Monica prayed that her son might become a decent Christian, and he grew into a saint.

The artist, too, finds himself driven on the same upward path. He feels that the physical beauty which he is in pursuit of owes its charm to spiritual qualities ; Art, in spite of his protests, proclaims itself a form of life, and he finds himself engaged in the quest of a beauty which is also truth, and also goodness ; the light which beckons him on is a "light that never was on sea or land," a light which, if it is anything at all, is just a ray from the uncreated loveliness of God.

And in proportion as the true, the good, and the beautiful grow thus wider and loftier and more spiritual before the eyes of their votaries, the poorer and more insignificant do the particular cases or instances of each appear to be. They become mere imperfect illustrations of great laws and ideals, broken glimpses and confused echoes and distorted images of reality. Their true, or ideal, nature is seen to be overlaid with a tangle of irrelevant detail ; there is no permanence or completeness about them ; they contradict one another, and each of them is inconsistent with itself ; that which is just or lovely or true in one relation proves (as Plato was always insisting) to be false, ugly, or wrong in another.

If these particulars are to be reinstated in our estimation and invested with an individual worth of their own, this can only be done if the splendour of the idea is focused upon them, and if they are regarded, for the time being, as embodiments or representations of an ideal reality¹ which far transcends them all, and which itself tends more and more to be located in the mind of God. We begin, then, with faith

¹ Cf. Professor Stewart, *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*, Part 2.

in truth and beauty and goodness as the condition of doing even the humblest and most empirical work in science or art or philanthropy ; and, later, the growing vastness and verified reality of these objects of faith lead on to faith in God, in a Divine mind like our own but infinitely "more so," which alone seems able to comprehend them in their greatness and their mutual connectedness.

And the second reason for this ascent to God, as to one who has a nature like our own, is an eternally pathetic one. It lies in the great paradox that the man who is pursuing these great ideals has himself a perishing, limited existence upon earth ; that in the short span of a human lifetime he has barely time to touch the fringe of his chosen work. If these ideals, which an instinct of his nature teaches him to believe in, are to reveal themselves to him in a manner at all adequate to their greatness, then, just as they have their own fulness in the mind of God, so also he will have in God a full and eternal life in which to contemplate and enjoy them. Otherwise he, in his pursuit of them, is a fraud or a failure. There is no order or completeness about him ; his whole life becomes an illusion and a mockery ; he is condemned to passing glimpses of an ideal which he can never really grasp or understand. In that case faith, which aimed at bringing order and coherence into our mental outlook, will have failed disastrously in its work. It will have fired us with aspirations after a world to which we are hopelessly unable to attain. Whilst unfolding its great ideals of knowledge and love, it was all the time teaching us the quest

of the Infinite ; and now it turns round and proclaims that, at least to us, the Infinite is an empty dream. But a faith which does that destroys itself and discredits its own previous achievements. The fact is, faith cannot for ever be poised in mid-air ; it must either soar to God or flutter down into the mire. If there is no God in whom our ideals live, and in whom we shall be able to contemplate them in their fullness, can we be sure that even in their lower stages these ideals are real and true ? May not art be the following of a will-o'-the-wisp, of a delusive dream ? May not goodness be nothing more than a subtle distillation of pride and vanity and self-conceit ? May not knowledge, with all its elaborate mental machinery, be taking us away from reality instead of revealing it to us ? Current literature and speculation are full of the pessimism which expresses baffled aspirations and a maimed and dying faith, and which urges a return to the crude particulars of sensation and appetite.

Thus we find that the faith which proposed infinite ideals for our thought and action is compelled either to go forward or to retrace its steps. It must either renounce these ideals as foolishness, or it must rise to God, as to one in whom they have their substantial reality, and in whom we also have an eternal life, the only life adequate to their attainment. When the second alternative is chosen, our idea of God grows more definite. It solidifies as the conception of a Being who possesses in Himself the absolute, eternal perfection of truth and beauty and goodness, and through union with whom they can be con-

fidently pursued in earth and enjoyed for ever in heaven.

But a further fact of great importance follows. If our spiritual endowment leads us to think of God as having a nature like our own, in which He enjoys the fruition of perfect truth and beauty and goodness, this can only mean that we are thinking of Him as a personal Being, since personality in our own case just consists in our volitional, intellectual, and emotional capacities. The exercise of such capacities is not a mere blind event, like sunrise or a thunderstorm, but a self-conscious act, involving a knowledge of what we are doing and a sense of responsibility for it, and it is these characteristics that our word *personal* stands for. A God, then, who knowingly and consciously beholds the perfection of these ideals must be a personal God.

Philosophical difficulties in the way of ascribing personality to God are quite irrelevant here, where we are dealing with the witness of a naïve, unsophisticated impulse, not with metaphysical analysis. The only difference which we need notice here between human and divine personality is a difference in comprehensiveness and mode of operation. We think of God as exercising a restful and simultaneous contemplation of the innermost reality of those ideals, whose outer fringe we just manage to touch by the piecemeal operations of our human reason. And experience will probably teach us that, the more restful and contemplative we can ourselves become, the nearer we approach to this inwardness of truth.

So far, our position is this: we possess, or rather are possessed by, an obstinate, instinctive sense of

affinity to God. The outcome of our experience in the pursuit of knowledge and goodness leads us to express this affinity as a *likeness of nature* to God. The objects of our quest are so vast, and in the last resort so spiritual and unearthly, and again our span of life is so ludicrously inadequate to their attainment, that we think of a self-conscious, perfect life of God, in which they perfectly exist, and through union with which we may ourselves continue to exist after this life is over, no longer catching fitful gleams of the truth but viewing it completely in the vision of God.

And now two further considerations occur to us.

First, if God is, like ourselves, a personal Being, we shall be prepared to recognize in Him such a distinction of conscious factors or elements as would render possible in His case the same sort of personal life which our intercourse with other people puts within our own reach. Our rational life requires objects upon which it is exercised ; and in the case of love, which is the highest expression of our moral life, these objects are persons like ourselves. We shall be prepared to find something of the same sort of personal distinction within the nature of the Deity.

And, secondly, if love in some sense is an eternal characteristic of God's nature, and if it is through union with Him that we gain a perfect and satisfying attainment of our ideals, we shall further think of Him as of one who is interested in us, who cares for our welfare and wishes us to attain to that union with Himself. Personality, in the sense in which we are led to ascribe it to God, implies Providence, or a desire and power to help us in our earthly

struggles and to guide our steps to the goal of eternal blessedness.

And how does this Providence work? What if union with God is not only the distant goal of our aspirations, but also the gift by which we are helped to its attainment? What if we are made, in a certain manner, partakers of His nature here, in order that we may partake of it fully hereafter? What if the *life of God* is communicated to us here by certain rites in order that we may afterwards attain to a perfect *likeness to God* in heaven?

In that case life and likeness will be brought into close relations. The presence of God's life in us here and now will be the support of our efforts as we struggle to attain this likeness and the earnest of their success. But, further, if God is present in us, He will be present not simply as a lively hope but as the substance of the things hoped for; not only as the earnest of success, but as its eternal reality. God's life in us *is* our likeness to God, a likeness which grows more perfect as that life becomes stronger and more dominant. Our present life will stand to our future life as the life of the child to the life of the man. It is the same life in both; only in the former it is inchoate and undeveloped, a matter of hopes and promises and instincts; in the latter it attains to the fullness of maturity and power. It depends very much on the temperament of the boy whether he loves to look forward to the future when he will be a grown man, like his father, or whether he prefers to remind himself that he is now his father's son, with his father's ideals showing themselves in his character and his father's lifeblood running in his veins.

So we, according to our disposition, may either *contemplate* God as present in us, communicating His fullness to us as our feeble capacities are able to receive it ; or we may *use* God's presence in us as a help and an encouragement towards the attainment of a perfect likeness to Him in heaven.

In the former case our religion will be primarily experience ; in the latter it will be primarily faith.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

SO far we have been dealing with religion from the side of natural human instincts, together with the expression which they have given to themselves in primitive rites (such as sacrifice and the ideas that cluster round it) and in the hypothesis of the "conservation of values" in God. That is, we have been occupied with some of the factors which make up what is called Natural Religion. And now, before we pass to Christianity as a Positive or Revealed Religion, *i.e.*, a religion which rests not merely on natural instincts and aspirations but on the life and doctrine of an historical Teacher who claims to act and speak with divine authority, it is important to consider the relation in which this latter type of religion stands to the former.

Natural religion, then, is the background, or rather the enveloping atmosphere, which a positive religion takes for granted, and in which it makes its appearance.

This may be illustrated from two hypothetical cases. First, supposing that Christianity were to be abandoned as false, natural religion would still survive,

Natural religion, with its desire for God and immortality, rests on a deep-seated and ineradicable instinct of human nature, an instinct as strong and permanent as the instinct of procreation, with which Plato expressly compares it.

If it is debarred from expressing itself in one way, it will cast about for another way. If Christianity is given up, the instinct may resolve itself into a vague cosmic emotion in some form of pantheistic theory, or it may try to gain some experimental proof of itself in spiritualism (though this attempt can hardly be successful until the spirits manage to say something rather more worth listening to than at present); or, failing any worthier object, man may return to the worship of himself in some revivalistic orgy of Positivism; or, lastly, religion may simply survive in a languid air of superiority, which is bored with the world but knows of no substitute for it. At any rate, it seems clear that the abandonment of Christianity would not mean the destruction of religion altogether.

And, secondly, let us suppose the case of critics who have made up their minds that the instincts on which natural religion rests are worthless; that, instead of forming a valuable and permanent asset of human endowment, they are only a relic of childish superstition which will drop off as the race grows to maturity. In that case, the question of Christianity is prejudged in an adverse sense. For Christianity presents itself as the satisfaction of an instinctive need. It is, indeed, a satisfaction which claims supernatural authority for itself; but then, if the need which asks for satisfaction is a mere delusion, it is obviously unnecessary to invoke a deity and a revealed religion

to deal with it. And it would undoubtedly have saved trouble if this elementary fact had been more generally remembered.

If the instinctive sense of God and the need of religion are illusive and unfounded, then Christianity is doomed, since it is an answer to a question which ought never to have been asked, the supply of a commodity for which there is, or will shortly be, no demand. People who take this line will not waste their time over textual and historical criticism; it would be simpler and shorter merely to waive Christianity aside as something hopelessly out of date, because there is no longer anything for it to appeal to, nor any ground for it to stand on. If it is to be worth while to consider the credentials of Christianity at all, this can only be done by critics who recognize that the religious instinct is a real and undying item in the endowment of the human spirit, which will persist throughout history, and will insist on finding some embodiment and satisfaction for itself, either in Christianity or elsewhere.

It may be argued that this gives Christianity a position inferior to that of natural religion, if it is true that Christianity falls with the fall of natural religion, whilst natural religion can survive the fall of Christianity. Surely, it will be said, the meaning of Revelation is that God speaks with an authoritative voice which demands recognition and acceptance on our part, whether we are or are not favourably inclined to listen to it through the possession of certain instincts and inclinations of our own.

But religion implies not only that God speaks, but that we have the capacity of hearing and under-

standing. If this capacity is absent, it might well be the case that God is really speaking, and speaking absolute truth ; but He would be speaking in a language unknown to us, and we should remain uninstructed and unedified.

Christianity, then, must rest on a natural instinct of faith, in which we lift up our hearts to God, in which our soul gaspeth unto Him as a thirsty land. It is the hungry who are thus filled with good things, the thirsty who are to come to Christ and drink. If there is none of that hunger and thirst, the proffered food will have no attraction and no meaning. The acceptance of Christianity implies the pre-existence of certain instincts and demands. But on the other hand it is equally important to remember that, if these instincts and demands seem to gain full recognition and complete satisfaction in the Christian scheme, this will be a strong *prima facie* consideration in favour of its truth. Of course the sources of the Christian tradition will still have to be probed and interrogated, and its evidences impartially weighed ; but a religion that is felt to speak straight to the heart and to answer the deepest needs of men will be recognized to have a claim to consideration and a respectful hearing of its case.

Now we saw that the primitive instinct of religion seized upon sacrifice as the one essential rite in which it could find a natural and adequate satisfaction for itself.

This was seen to be the case in races so different in their genius as the Semites and the Pelasgic and Achæan stocks of the Hellenic nation. And,

further, the object of sacrifice was always communion with God, given or renewed or restored by the feasting upon a victim which was itself regarded as akin both to God and to man.

And, lastly, this sacrificial communion had its piacular or atoning aspect, expressed either by the choice of a special victim or by the mode in which the sacrifice was made.

It is very obvious how the force of these primitive rites is expressed in Christianity by the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ, God and man, a sacrifice which effects reconciliation or atonement, and the merits of which are applied to individuals by the communion with God which is secured in the eucharistic feast. The essence of Christianity is thus declared to be nothing more nor less than the reception of a divine life, whereby communion with God is received and strengthened and restored; whilst the condition of the reception is the piacular sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross and perpetuated upon our altars. Christianity is here seen to be true to the primitive natural instinct, and to interpret it in a way which strips it of all its crudeness, whilst preserving the all-important conception that religion is reception of the life of God. Of course the form is different in many respects. The life is a spiritual, not a physical life; we are the children of God, not by natural descent but by adoption; the victim sacrificed is not a sacred animal, but God incarnate; the Body and Blood of the victim are taken and received after a spiritual and heavenly manner, and the circle of the communicant kinsmen is enlarged to include all mankind.

But such differences mean, not the abandonment of the conception, but rather its growth and purification, its emancipation from animalism, and its perfect expression as consisting not in a fiction of physical descent but in the power of a spiritual union. If we value the natural and primitive instincts of religion, which we have recognized to be the foundation of revealed truth, then a revelation which thus marvellously justifies and perfects them must gain thereby, to say the least, a very strong claim on our consideration.

And we saw further that, under more civilized and developed conditions, the same instinct of affinity with God expressed itself in the conviction that in God there eternally exists the perfection of all those ideals of knowledge and goodness which we value and pursue ; and that in God we may also attain to the perfect possession of them which baffles and eludes us on earth.

Now here too is a conviction which Christianity adopts and justifies in its doctrine of Christ as the Eternal Word, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and as the Incarnate Word by whom the fullness which dwells in Him is brought within our reach. The likeness between God and man is here expressed in full accordance with this principle, which is blindly affirmed elsewhere as the aspiration of our intellectual and moral life.

And, lastly, the attainment of Christ, and of all things in Christ, is not to be deferred altogether till another world.

The possession of Christ has come to be more and

more closely identified with the reception of His life through the sacrament. It is through being thus brought into communion with Him that men enter into their heritage of the treasures which are hidden in Christ. To win Christ, to be united to Him, to become one spirit with Him, is to have not merely the promise of perfect fruition, but its substantial reality here and now. Thus the great Christian sacrament will be the meeting-point of faith and experience ; it will be the reception of a life which, by its continual growth within us, is to mould us to an even greater likeness to Him from whom it comes.

If, then, we think of God as one who guarantees the reality of our values, and is the principle of their conservation, the Christian doctrine has, in this respect also, a very strong case in the claim which it makes upon us.

CHAPTER V

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

WE have considered the contributions which instinct and reflection have made to religious knowledge. We now come face to face with Christianity, and ask, How much is contributed to religious knowledge by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ? We might be tempted to answer hastily to the effect that the whole of our religious knowledge is due to Christ; that every item of His life and teaching is an authoritative contribution to religious knowledge. But, in the first place, we have seen that a good deal is contributed by that primitive instinct of religion which fashions the rite of sacrifice as its expression of itself, and by our reflection upon God as the Eternal Mind. And, secondly, we shall see that within the words of Christ we can and must draw distinctions. We cannot treat all Christ's utterances as equally infallible declarations of God's truth. Or rather, we can only do so on one plain supposition, namely, that in Christ's case the Eternal Word took the place of a human mind, so that Christ was constituted of a living human body on the one side, and, on the other, the indwelling Godhead of the

Second Person of the Holy Trinity. If that is so, then the human nature was a mere screen behind which stood the Godhead and through which it spoke; and everything which in us is the utterance or operation of a human mind is in Christ the utterance or operation of sheer un-mediated Godhead. Of course, in such a case every word spoken by Him will be an infallible declaration of absolute truth. The most cursory allusion which He makes to matters of literature or history is authoritative as to authorship or date; and anything that He says of the world of nature is a final decision, rendering further investigation both unnecessary and irreverent.

There is no doubt that, on the hypothesis that the Godhead takes the place of a human mind in Christ, this conclusion would inevitably follow. But then this very hypothesis was decisively rejected by the Church at the Second General Council, which condemned the speculations of Apollinaris. It was rejected as being inconsistent with the true and full humanity of Christ. If Christ is to be our Saviour, He must be perfect man as well as perfect God; and He can only be perfect man if He has a human mind as well as a human body and a human life.

Now, if Jesus Christ is divine, He will show this by His knowledge of God and His insight into the things of God. If His personality is the personality of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, this personality will manifest itself in His conscious relationship to the Father and the Spirit. The divinity of Christ will show itself in His knowledge of God and relationship with God. This will be its essential sign and mark.

On the other hand, if He is man, with a human

mind and will united to this divine personality, He will acquire knowledge in the same way as other men, and will have difficulties to face and temptations to overcome like other men.

Where is the difficulty ? Obviously in the term *knowledge*, which I have placed purposely in both clauses, in order to get at once to the root of the matter. If Jesus acquires knowledge in the same way as other men, then it would seem that His knowledge of God must be thus acquired ; and this means that, as far as knowledge goes, His divinity will be otiose and ineffective. And if, on the other hand, His knowledge is, in the case of theology, infallible and a direct output of His divine nature, must it not be regarded as equally infallible in the lower spheres of history and science ?

The criticism is easy and obvious ; but when looked at closely, it is seen to involve an equivocal or ambiguous use of the word *knowledge*.

Christ's knowledge of God is a different sort of knowledge from His knowledge of facts of history or nature. It is true, indeed, that all thought or knowledge, whether in Christ or in ourselves, involves certain processes in the brain-substance, and is subject to certain conditions and limitations in consequence. For instance, there is the need of concentrating attention, and the difficulty of sustaining it ; there is the mental fatigue, which is the same as what is called brain-fag ; and further there is a certain materialization of thought, and the necessity of describing the most spiritual conceptions under bodily images. All this may be taken as characteristic of all human knowledge, in consequence of the physical

and bodily conditions under which human knowledge is acquired and possessed. If Christ is really human, with a human mind and body, these characteristics will mark all His knowledge, whether of God or of the material universe. But within the sphere of human thought thus universally characterized there is a real and important distinction between *intuitive* and *discursive*. By the latter we mean the operations of the mind upon its sensations or ideas, in the way of comparison, inference, etc. By the former we mean immediate insight, analogous to touch or vision, to sensations of cold or heat, of pleasure or pain. Under the head of discursive work we place the acquisition of knowledge in science and history, etc.; under the head of intuitive, the experience of pleasure, or of colour, or of God. Such immediate intuitive knowledge is complete and self-contained; it needs nothing, as far as the experience itself goes, beyond efficient organs of receptivity. The *causes* of such experience may of course be discursively investigated in different branches of natural science; and again the phraseology in which the experience is *expressed* will vary from age to age. But in itself, the experience of such things is, as Aristotle says in the case of pleasure, complete in each item.

Thus it is perfectly natural and legitimate to draw a distinction between our Lord's knowledge of God, which is a case of intuitive experience, complete in itself and possessed of a reality corresponding to its intensity, and His knowledge of history or science, which are acquired by the gradual discursive work of the understanding upon its data, and which will vary from time to time according as the understanding

is better equipped for its work or has more data to work upon. The result will be that His knowledge of all matters scientific, literary or historical was the knowledge of His time, relative and contingent, whilst His knowledge of God was absolutely final and complete, with the perfection of unimpeded vision. We have seen how a sense of kinship to God is the underlying basis of all religion; how it exists as an unchanging instinct in human nature, alongside of the changing and progressive march of scientific achievement; and how, even in ordinary men and women, it realizes itself from time to time in an ineffable feeling of contact with the Godhead. If, then, the fact of kinship to God be enormously intensified, if the relation to God becomes actually a relation of identity, we can well conceive how this closest kinship to God should be realized in a clear, steady, undimmed vision of the Deity, a vision which can never be surpassed or superseded, but which remains the norm for all similar states and aspirations till the end of time. The condition of such unique experience will be the divine nature and origin of Him who is incarnate. We want no reservations or exceptions to His continued possession of divine attributes and prerogatives. Whilst keeping as clear as possible at present from theological definitions, we want to think of the Godhead as, in all its unimpaired plenitude, poured into the moulds of a complete human nature—a nature equipped with a human intelligence and will; with the result that what we call comprehensively science will be attained by the ordinary, progressive, piecemeal processes of the discursive understanding, whilst the intuitive insight into God will be complete

and perfect in virtue of the fact that kinship to God, in this particular case, consists not in a creaturely relation but in identity of nature. This does not imply anything in the way of a divided consciousness. Our Lord's consciousness was single and indivisible. It was the same consciousness which at one time studied the Hebrew Scriptures or spoke of the things of nature, at another time exercised an unclouded intuition into heavenly things. And this consciousness was the consciousness of the Eternal Word acting through the human brain and the human mind which He had taken up into organic union with Himself. The difference is not a difference within the consciousness itself, but a difference of the objects to which it is directed and of the methods which in each case it adopts. The study of a book or of nature depends ultimately on a succession of impressions, which are interpreted and systematized by the mind; and further, in doing this work, the mind employs certain forms or conceptions which in their turn have been derived from intercourse with teachers or companions, and which embody the current ideas of some particular time and country. The whole process is thus relative and contingent. On the other hand our intuitions of God are free from most of these drawbacks. In the first place God, the object of the intuition, is eternal and unchanging; and therefore any true intuition will also be a complete or final one. And, secondly, such mental processes of recognition or inference as are working in such a case are few and simple, depending comparatively little on local and temporal conditions. Even this knowledge will of course be mediated by physical brain-processes, and

will thereby be materialized and take a symbolical and pictorial form; but nevertheless the truths thus pictured will be eternally valid, just because the intuition itself is a clear intuition of an unchanging object.

The real difficulty will consist in giving *expression* to this perfect vision of God, in communicating it to others. Itself immediate and intuitive, and directed to what is timeless and supra-sensible, it can only give an account of itself through the use of a discursive understanding equipped with categories whose validity and usefulness lie just in the sphere of the transient and sensible. All true spiritual intuition is intimately personal, and therefore ineffable and incommunicable; it is coarsened and vulgarized when expressed in the hard crude terms of ordinary language. It has its own language; it speaks to another through that subtle spiritual influence with which one person appeals to and attracts another. Christ probably communicated His own kinship to the Father to His disciples more fully by the delicate influence of His character and manner and attitude than by the imperfect symbols through which He gave it articulate expression. At any rate we may be sure that the real inner meaning of those utterances was brought home to their minds by the contact of their spirit with His—a contact which turned the words which He spoke into “Spirit and truth,” and gave to those who heard Him the capacity of sympathetic spiritual comprehension.

Any verbal expression, then, which Christ gives to

His vision of God will be symbolical in a twofold sense. First, the form of the vision will be affected and coloured by its physical conditions; and, secondly, the interpretation of the vision will be accomplished by the use of instruments which are adapted to a very different service. We may think of Botticelli forming in his mind a spiritual conception of calumny; then proceeding to paint a picture of it, thus translating it into the world of form and colour; and further employing as his models certain chance Florentines who were in themselves in no wise connected either with the picture or the original idea; and in such a way we may gain a faint notion of the distance that separated our Lord's essential vision of God from the verbal expression which He gives to it in His teaching. His inherent divinity would enable Him to have an absolutely true and adequate perception of God and of His own relation to God; and such a perception will issue in His unfaltering conviction of the opposition between God and Satan as rival spiritual forces, of the reality of a judgment and of a kingdom of God, and of His own relation to that kingdom and to God Himself. On the other hand, the human brain would to some extent materialize the form of such perceptions; and the human environment, including the stage of education and culture at the time, would dictate the nature of the symbols in which it was set forth, and render His conception of times and methods apocalyptic and pictorial.

The alternative view, taken by those who hold a minimizing conception of Christ's Person, presents

Him to us as a Prophet who has gone through unique religious experiences resulting in a conviction that He stands in a unique relationship to God, and who, as a prophet, preaches a Gospel of the kingdom of God in the sense which was current at the time. And such a view is true as far as it goes ; and not only true, but useful. It is good for us sometimes to watch our creed in the making ; to see the incarnate Christ grappling with human problems in the light and by the power of those spiritual experiences which are His communion with the Heavenly Father. It was through these experiences, and the expression which He gave to them in His life and teaching, that the disciples came to believe on Him ; and the same may be the case with us. We feel the close congruity between such experiences and such a sense of relationship on the one hand, and the doctrine of the Divinity, as expressed in the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, on the other. Each throws light upon the other. The experiences, from their very uniqueness, lead onwards to this doctrine, and the doctrine ratifies the experiences, declaring that in Christ's case they were nothing but natural and normal, and that the peculiar relationship to God which they bore witness to was true.

But on the theory that He was nothing more than a man, difficulties rush in. S. Peter felt that He could not be classed as "one of the prophets," and we feel that he was right. We are invited to place Him on the same level as the Baptist, and are reminded that according to S. Matthew they both delivered an identical message : "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (S. Matt. iii. 1 ; iv. 17).

But the comparison is an unfortunate one. As we listen to the Baptist, nothing strikes us more than the profound humility (emphasized in all the Gospels) with which he points men away from himself to that other Prophet, who, he felt, stood on quite a different level from his own. He himself baptized with water to repentance; the other will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He himself proclaims the nearness of a winnowing act of judgment; but who holds the winnowing fan but that other Prophet, who will thoroughly purge his floor, gathering the wheat into the garner and burning the chaff with unquenchable fire? (S. Matt. iii. 11, 12.) We note indeed in Christ much of what we may call impassioned prophetic utterance; but alongside of that we note also a calm unruffled majesty, a quiet authority in dealing with men and accepting their homage, a sureness of touch in treating of spiritual truth, and (not least significant) a habit of subtly transforming the very symbols which He habitually uses, and adapting them to a sense quite different from that in which an ordinary prophet would employ them. We may illustrate this last characteristic from His use of the expressions "the kingdom of heaven" (or of God) and "the Son of Man," not only on account of the great interest which is gathering round them, but because our Lord's use of the terms illustrates admirably our contention as to the nature of His knowledge, and the contribution which He consequently makes to religious knowledge in ourselves.

See Appendix, p. 183.

CHAPTER VI

"THE SON OF MAN" ¹

THERE is no doubt that the expression *the Son of Man* was derived from Daniel vii. 13, 14 : "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The term seems to have been accepted, but in a rather vague and indeterminate sense, as a title of the Messiah. The coming of the Son of Man was understood to mean a great world-catastrophe, whereby the present order of things would be violently ended, and a new supernatural theocracy introduced. The conception floating before the minds of the Jews was

¹ The books which I have studied recently on this subject are Johannes Weiss's *Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, and Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* ; together with Professor Driver's article on "The Son of Man" in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.

partly political and partly eschatological, the latter quality becoming more dominant as the visible order of things appeared more desperate. When it seemed impossible that a permanent deliverance should be accomplished under the present dispensation, the deliverance was conceived under the form of a Divine act which should first destroy the existing world and then inaugurate a kingdom of God to take its place. The Son of Man, as God's emissary and representative, was conceived as a radiant, transcendent, victorious Champion, somewhat resembling the appearance of S. Michael in Christian art.

Now, our Lord adopts the conception in the foregoing sense when He speaks of the Son of Man coming in power in the clouds of heaven. Moreover, in some very significant passages the kingdom to be thus inaugurated is spoken of as near: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power";¹ and still more strongly when He is sending out the Apostles, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come."²

And not only is the catastrophe near at hand, but it will be sudden and unexpected. It is compared to other swift acts of judgment which caught men unprepared; to the Flood, and to the destruction of Sodom. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. . . . Likewise

¹ S. Mark ix. 1. (Cf. S. Matt. xvi. 28; S. Luke ix. 27.)

² S. Matt. x. 23. (Not in the parallel passages of S. Mark and S. Luke.)

also as it was in the days of Lot ; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."¹ And even more vividly it is compared to a flash of lightning, which is upon us before we can say "Here it is" or "There it is." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation : neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, Lo there ! for, behold, the kingdom of God is amongst you. . . . For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth to the other part under heaven ; so shall also the Son of Man be in His day."²

Further, the fact that our Lord speaks of Himself in the third person as the Son of Man seems to indicate His sense of a profound difference between Himself at the time when He was speaking and Himself on that great day when He should come as Judge.³ The difference is strongly emphasized in such a passage as this : "Whosoever shall be ashamed of *Me* and of *My* words, of him shall the *Son of Man* be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."⁴ The *Son of Man* is a title which, it seems, might be applied to Him now, but as it were in an anticipatory sense ; that which the term signifies is a condition of exaltation and power which He does not yet possess.

All these considerations point to the fact that our Lord not only employed apocalyptic language in

¹ S. Luke xvii. 26-30.

² S. Matt. xxiv. 27 ; S. Luke xvii. 20-4.

³ S. Matt. xxv. 31-2.

⁴ S. Luke ix. 26.

speaking of Himself, but, sometimes at any rate, employed it in the ordinary apocalyptic sense ; that is, He was proclaiming a near coming of the Judgment and of God's kingdom, and also pointing to Himself as the central figure in the accomplishment of those events.

We are here, of course, in the heart of a problem which is causing wide-spread anxiety and perplexity. The difficulty, shortly and bluntly stated, is that our Lord seems to be making a prophecy that was not fulfilled. It is a real difficulty, which must be faced and not evaded. What our attitude is to it will appear later. At present we would point out a very important fact, namely, that if this was the one and only sense in which these expressions were used by our Lord the difficulty would be much greater than it actually is. But this is by no means the case. The expressions in question are also used in a very different significance, which the thoroughgoing eschatologists make desperate efforts to explain away. We may say briefly that our Lord introduced two main modifications into the current doctrine ; first, that in a very real sense the kingdom had already come, in His own person, and, secondly, that its coming involved His own rejection and suffering and death as antecedent conditions of the radiant glory which should follow. The two qualifications are closely connected ; if He is now the Son of Man, in whom the kingdom comes, then the Son of Man must be a man of suffering, going forward to the death which He foresaw, and must have wider and deeper sympathies than the Son of Man as ordinarily conceived. Now, in the first place, He does undoubtedly use the phrase *Son of Man* as

applicable to Himself under present conditions ; for instance, when He says, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,"¹ sometimes also as a direct personal description of Himself ; for instance, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say" etc.,² or again, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you . . . for the Son of Man's sake" (S. Luke vi. 22 ; in the parallel passage, S. Matt. v. 11, it is "for My sake").

The term is here used, as Weiss admits, without the smallest whiff of eschatology.³ But in that case it follows that the eschatological sense cannot have been the essential and exclusive one ; there must have been a more general meaning, including that and others. So again, with regard to the kingdom, there is the very significant saying, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is *come* upon you."⁴ The kingdom has already come ; and is proved to have come by the Lord's mastery over evil powers. Also, when He was sending out the seventy He charged them with the message, to be delivered equally whether they were received or rejected, "The kingdom of God is come *nigh* unto you"⁵ ; that is, they were to announce it as in the near future. But when they return with joy, proclaiming that even the devils were subject to them through His name, His answer is, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,"⁶ and He proceeds to give them power over all the power of the enemy. There is a close connexion between the two cases. Our

¹ S. Mark ii. 10.

² S. Matt. xi. 18, 19.

³ *Predigt*, p. 202.

⁴ S. Luke xi. 20.

⁵ S. Luke x. 9 and 11.

⁶ S. Luke x. 17, 18,

Lord's overthrow of the kingdom of Satan by the casting out of devils proved that the rival kingdom of God had come. He further sends out the seventy to places which He intends to visit Himself, to announce the nearness of the kingdom; but they return with the news that the devils are subject to them, and this is the sign that the kingdom has actually come; and so Jesus tells them that their overthrow of Satan had been seen symbolically by Himself in the vision of Satan's fall. All through our Lord conceives of two rival powers in deadly conflict—the power of Satan and the power of God. The defeat of Satan means the establishment of the other power, the coming of God's *kingdom*, with the order and peace and healing of body and soul which will accompany it.

Since, then, Satan is defeated in the works of Christ, these same works denote the arrival of God's kingdom. Thus the eschatological prophecy of a coming event passes into an authoritative declaration of an accomplished fact.

And secondly, the deliverance of God's people from the tyranny of Satan involves suffering and rejection for Himself. The deliverance cannot be effected without the co-operation of the people concerned, whether the deliverance is mainly from sickness or mainly from sin. And this co-operation, shown in faith and repentance, was rare. "He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief."¹ He had come into His own, and His own received Him not. He was

¹ S. Mark vi. 5, 6.

grieved at the hardness of their heart; publicans and harlots, strangers from the East and West, might be accepted, but the children of the kingdom were casting themselves out: the call to repentance was falling on deaf ears. If they were to be delivered at all, it must be through the paying of a ransom by Himself;¹ the deliverance must be brought by a remission of sins through the shedding of His blood,² before they could be incorporated as citizens into the kingdom of God. And so the vision of a triumphant Son of Man is shaded with the darkness of suffering. It is very remarkable how in the midst of associations which speak of glory He deliberately emphasizes the necessity of antecedent suffering. Directly S. Peter has declared the Messiahship, "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes [the official representatives of the chosen people], and be killed, and after three days rise again."³ And, again, after the splendid epiphany of the Transfiguration, He prophesies the same destiny for Himself as that of the Baptist: "Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them."⁴

And, conversely, the clearest and most unambiguous identification of Himself with the victorious Son of Man is made in the utter humiliation of the trial before the High Priest. At that awful moment, with the shadow of death resting upon Him, when the Son of Man is being rejected and done to death, a similar

¹ S. Matt. xx. 28.

² S. Matt. xxvi. 28.

³ S. Mark viii. 31.

⁴ S. Matt. xvii. 12; cf. verse 22.

revulsion of feeling comes. That weakness and humiliation is not the end ; the victory and triumph are still to come ; the vision of Jewish hope and confidence shines bright through the gloom. If they have done with Him as they listed ; if the Son of Man, in paying their ransom, has suffered all this at their hands, the other side of the truth will vindicate itself too : " Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹

We see, then, that whilst our Lord adopts the current conception of a Messianic Son of Man, and applies it, with reserve and reticence, to Himself, the conception dissolves and recasts itself in His hands. He begins as a Prophet, summoning men to repentance as the condition of their entrance into the coming kingdom ; and He feels, with a gathering force of conviction, through His sense of a unique relationship to God, that He is here and now the Son of Man, that in His Person the kingdom has already come, and that His death is to be the appointed means by which their entrance, through repentance, into that kingdom will be made possible. He, as the Son of Man, has power on earth to forgive sins ; but forgiveness requires their repentance as well as His power ; and they will be guided to repentance by the appeal of His stupendous sacrifice. At last, when lifted up on the cross, He will draw their stubborn hearts to Himself.

If we want to get a definition of the term Son of Man, such as will include these various elements, we might adopt the words of Professor Driver, and

¹ S. Mark xi. 62.

say that it means "one who completely fulfilled the idea of man, and as such was in specially close relationship to the Father."¹ The Son of Man is man as God made him, true to God's purpose and intention; not an abstraction or ideal; a real individual man; but a *supreme* man, supremely strong, and supremely pitiful, able to inaugurate a divine kingdom, and able to do this by the utter sacrifice of Himself.

And lastly, if in the light of these considerations we return to the difficulty mentioned above, we shall surely find that, whilst still a difficulty, it is not by any means so serious as it seemed. Our Lord has a divine, and perfect, intuition into the will of the Father, His own relation to the Father, and the mission which He had received from the Father to redeem the world and establish the Father's kingdom. But He has also a human mind, with which He has to envisage the details of this divine plan and the method of its accomplishment. It was natural, and indeed inevitable, that in doing this He should adopt the accepted symbols of His day, and use the current language of apocalyptic prophecy. We have seen how, on the prompting of His unique spiritual experiences, the meaning of these terms and symbols came to be wonderfully transformed, how the early message seems to have become more complex, resolving itself into a twofold announcement; first, that the kingdom was not a future event but a present fact, that in His own person and His own works it had actually come; and, secondly, that at

¹ Hastings' Dictionary, iv. p. 581.

some unspecified time, after the ransom of His death had been paid, it would come in visible majesty and power.

The "seed" parables declare in a mystery this future coming of the kingdom, its appearance in the midst of humble surroundings, its rapid and victorious growth from a seed divinely sown. The Lord Himself in the hidden obscurity of His lowly life, or more precisely His presence among men and the doctrine which He taught amongst those who knew Him not, was the seed which should produce a mighty revolution by its irresistible, supernatural growth.¹

Apart from the parables, our Lord uses apocalyptic language in speaking of the future advent of the kingdom; He employs the pictures and symbols which were present to His own mind and to the minds of His contemporaries. Thus the power and the prerogatives of the Apostles are figuratively described in S. Matt. xix. 28: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So, again, in the very important passage (S. Mark ix. 1): "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the Son of Man come with power" (or "in His kingdom," S. Matt. xvi. 28). With this we may class the passage already alluded to, giving our

¹ The preaching of repentance by the Baptist is regarded by Schweitzer as the seed; but repentance must be rather referred to the soil than the seed. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 356. This last chapter of the "Quest" is a most brilliant and suggestive bit of writing.

Lord's declaration before the High Priest: "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹ In both these utterances the central fact is the exaltation and triumph of Him who was now, in His humiliation, going forward to suffering and death. The symbols are those of contemporary eschatology. The fact symbolized was accomplished in the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, all of which events took place within the lifetime of that generation, and the last of which must, in its startling results, have come within the knowledge of the chief priests themselves. That the Resurrection would be a valid fulfilment of the prophecy is clearly stated by Schweitzer himself. "The Resurrection, the metamorphosis, and the Parousia of the Son of Man take place simultaneously, and are one and the same act." "It is one and the same thing whether He speaks of His Resurrection or of His coming on the clouds of heaven."² And with regard to Pentecost, it is interesting to notice how the idea of "power" which marks the coming of the Son of Man is emphatically associated with the coming of the Holy Ghost, in which Christ was to come Himself. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."³ "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."⁴

Again, "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no

¹ S. Mark xiv. 26.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 364. The "metamorphosis" is the change which all must undergo when the new order of things is inaugurated.

Cf. I Cor. xv. 51.

³ S. Luke xxiv. 49.

⁴ Acts i. 8.

more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God ;”¹ with the subsequent words recorded by S. Luke : “I appoint unto you a kingdom . . . that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom.”² Here the picture through which He expresses Himself is the Messianic feast as conceived, *e.g.*, in Isaiah xxv. 6. The same idea gives its colour to the prophecy, “Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” The facts underlying this imagery are, first, His return to His disciples when the Passion was over, when they “did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead ;”³ and, more generally, His communion with them through the Spirit in His Church.

How far these facts were explicitly, and in detail, present to our Lord’s mind at the time when the utterances were made, we cannot state with assurance ; but we must remember (as Professor Sanday says) that “in a case like this, which relates to the fulfilment of prophecy in history, the problem is to determine not only what the Son meant, but what the Father meant, speaking through the Son.”⁴

But we can at any rate understand that our Lord had, in virtue of His divinity, an absolutely true insight into these tremendous issues of the spiritual world, as they expressed the eternal purposes of the Father, whilst His inferences as to the manner in which these issues would be worked out in history were steeped in symbolism, and exhibit features

¹ S. Mark xiv. 25.

² S. Luke xx. 30.

³ Acts x. 41.

⁴ Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 118.

common to all apocalypses in the combination and foreshortening of the events described. This is especially obvious in the mission of the twelve Apostles as described in S. Matt. x. Schweitzer remarks that in this mission our Lord foretold, as *immediately* imminent, the three characteristic events which were to mark the end of the world: sufferings and persecution, the outpouring of the Spirit (verse 20), and the coming of the Son of Man (verse 23); and he adds that none of the prophecies were fulfilled, since the disciples returned "safe and sound" and the Parousia had not taken place. But we must not thus apply a foot-rule to great apocalyptic utterances; such a method of interpretation has been discredited in the case of the Book of Revelation, and ought not to be revived in the case of the sayings of our Lord. The foreshortening of events is not the same as their nonfulfilment. Before long the sufferings did come, abundantly enough; and the Spirit was poured out; and the Son of Man, who came in the coming of the Spirit, will in the belief of Christians come once more in the power and glory of the Father. The afflictions of the Church, the descent of the Holy Ghost, the judgment of the world, the three great truths of suffering, consolation, and consummation, are fused together by our Lord in that apocalyptic imagery which focuses the light on the coming of God's kingdom, as a supernatural and spiritual society, which is the inheritance of the elect.

We have watched the process by which Christ takes up the current conceptions of the day, the Jewish political ideal and the Jewish eschatological hope, and pours into those old bottles the wine

of divine truth. Under the stress and ferment of that wine the bottles writhe and burst, and the wine flows out. The political element disappears completely; and the eschatology, focused by them on the near coming of a violent disruption, is in part thrust back to a more or less distant future, and in part brought forward to the present, when the Desire of all Nations had come and had stood amongst men who knew Him not.

What, then, does the doctrine of the kingdom mean to us at the present time?

It means, first, a judgment at some unknown time when this world-order will have come to an end, and when Christ will return in power and great glory. There is no reason whatever to renounce this item of the Creed. Christ's doctrine, as we have just said, resolved itself into a doctrine that the kingdom had come already in Himself as the Incarnate Son, and would come again at other times and in other ways. And His coming as Judge was clearly and emphatically alluded to as distant. This is indicated in the Parables of the Tares (S. Matt. xiii. 30), the Net (*ibid.*, 49), the Ten Virgins (S. Matt. xxv. 5), and the Talents ("after a *long time* the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them," *ibid.*, 19).

It is perfectly true that, now and again, special times of judgment occur in the course of the world's history ("die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht"), as notably at the fall of Jerusalem; and it is also true that every man in the course of his own individual life passes judgment on himself by his acceptance or rejection of God's grace (S. John iii. 18); but God is not only immanent in the unfolding of history and of the

individual soul—He also sits above the watercourses, dwells in His own high and holy place, and will in His own good time make an end of that world-order which at His own good pleasure He called out of nothingness at the first.

And in the second place, as the kingdom of God came in Christ's Person during His human life, so it comes in those who accept Him, not merely by anticipation of hope, but rather by the annihilation of all time-relations in the present possession of eternal life through Him. This kingdom, which is eternal life, has its necessary characteristics and its stringent requirements, which will be dealt with later. Here it is only necessary to insist that the kingdom which thus comes in the lifetime of Christians is a supernatural, spiritual thing. Weiss and Tyrrell both speak as though a transcendent supernatural order could only manifest itself in the paroxysms of some violent catastrophe, shattering the visible world into fragments. Their only alternative to such a catastrophe seems to be the ordinary development of civilization on ethical and nonspiritual lines. But a life can be spiritual and supernatural and transcendental in its origin and goal, in its essence and manifestations, without being heralded by volcanic eruptions and earthquakes and the like.

A new supernatural kingdom comes with the coming of the Paraclete, in whom Christ comes Himself ; for the individual this means not a mere moral victory of his better nature, but the redemption of his whole nature by divine grace ; for society it means not the development of a secular civilization, but the rival

establishment of a city of God with its own laws and its own ideals, which stand in sharp contrast to those of the secular world and are never merged in them. It is worth noting that our Lord's teaching distinctly recognizes the life of God's kingdom as an other-worldly life growing and working in the world. The Parables of the Sower, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven all bear witness to a life supernatural in its origin and operation, a life which is strongly contrasted with the lower environment (of soil or meal) in which it is placed. That environment is itself weak and unable to produce the spiritual result until a new spiritual force is brought to bear upon it. It is a clear doctrine of abiogenesis ; it is the "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is of the Spirit is spirit," of S. John ; the "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" of S. Paul.

The kingdom of heaven is, as Weiss himself points out, identified with eternal life ("If thy hand offend thee, cut it off ; it is better for thee to enter into *life* maimed," compared with "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the *kingdom of God* with one eye," etc., S. Mark ix. 43 and 47) ; and this life of membership in the kingdom can be lived on earth.

When devils, who yield to no smug incantations of worldly motives, are cast out by the finger of God, the kingdom of God, as a supernatural spiritual domination, is not only at the door but is actually come, bringing with it the assurance of its coming hereafter with glory and with the visible manifestation of the King.

Here too, then, faith and experience are met together : faith in a "far-off divine event" when the servants shall not only serve Him but see His face ; and experience, here and now, of His victorious presence as a revolutionary, supernatural, redeeming, quickening life.

CHAPTER VII

CHRIST AND RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

WHAT then, in view of these considerations, are the elements permanently added by the life and teaching of our Lord to our religious knowledge? They are mainly two: a revelation of God's nature, and a revelation of a way by which union with God may be attained. The former is mainly contributed by His teaching; the latter mainly by His actions; and the former is clearly intended by Christ to be subordinate to the latter. The revelation tells us just so much about God as shall lead on to our intelligent union with Him. Mere knowledge, divorced from practical ends, is always discouraged. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and be witnesses to Me."¹ Here is a germinal doctrine of the Trinity, limited and restricted to the purposes of practical religion. So, too, the Trinitarian formula of the commission to the Apostles is given for use in the Sacrament which makes men God's children.² Being God, Christ can speak with authority of the

¹ Acts i. 7, 8.

² S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

divine nature ; being Incarnate, He speaks of it from the point of view of human needs, as well as under symbols and images intelligible to man. "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."¹

And in revealing the Fount of Godhead as *the Father*, He is using the language of men, language which makes no pretence to scientific exactness (which indeed, in its literal acceptance, gave colour to the teaching of Arius), but which conveys an eternal truth, and a truth which is powerful in its appeal to human hearts and wills.

The love of the Father for the Son is the measure of the love of the Son for the disciples ; the authority with which the Father sent the Son is the measure of the authority with which the Son sends the disciples to carry on His work. "God of God" is superior as an expression of His Deity : "Light of Light"² is superior as an expression of His co-eternity ; but neither of these formulas conveys an idea of the perfect love which is the essence alike of God's nature and of His relationship to His creatures. The Creed very wisely gives all three terms in succession.

Again, in speaking of the Holy Spirit, He is not concerned to expound metaphysically the Spirit's relationship to the Father and Himself.

The Spirit "comes forth from the Father" ; this may be taken as an eternal or timeless truth ; but all the other statements are concerned with His temporal mission. He will be sent by Christ, or by the Father in Christ's name ; He will be a personal energy,

¹ S. Matt. xi. 27.

² S. John xv. 9 ; xx. 21.

teaching men and guiding them into all truth. Profoundly significant are the two relations in which Christ declares that the Spirit will stand to mankind ; an intimate internal relation with believers, and an external relation of judicial antagonism to the world. "He shall be in you" ; and this close inward presence will be of such paramount power and worth that the visible presence of the Incarnate will be withdrawn in order to make room for it, since the Spirit could not be given till Jesus was glorified. And, on the other hand, "He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The divine Spirit, though immanent in the world, would never be identified with it even in its highest achievements. He would ever point away to Christ ; to the rejection of Christ, and of the spiritual light which was manifested in Christ, as something which stamps as sinful things which appear glorious to man ; away to Christ, as the glorified source of a higher righteousness than the world can attain to or imagine ; away to Christ as the vanquisher of evil, and therefore the judge of evildoers.

That the Spirit will be thus in the world, but never of the world ; that He will be the representative of the Father and the Son, and yet dwell in the heart of Christians—those are the two great truths on which Christ insists, and they are both pre-eminently practical truths.

Further, He not only reveals the Father and the Spirit in their relation to Himself, but He presents Himself as the revelation of the Godhead in a human life, as "God in man made manifest." The Incarna-

tion, whatever else it may be in purpose and result, is quite certainly the expression of God's character in terms of human nature.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things"; "I speak that which I have seen with My Father."¹ The life of Christ reveals to us the attitude in which God stands to men when He is actually clothed in their nature, immersed in their problems and temptations, and living amongst them as one of themselves.

In fact, what gives to Christianity its unique character is just this union of authoritative teaching with a full understanding of the nature of those to whom the teaching is given.

What, then, are the characteristics of this attitude in which God incarnate stands to mankind?

First, we note the uncompromising demands which are made. The Incarnation confirms and ratifies the greatness of man, and enforces the principle that, to whom much is given, of him shall much be required. The children of men are inheritors of the kingdom of heaven: it is "a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world": they are "the children of the kingdom," and are called upon to value their citizenship in it above any earthly possession. This principle really underlies all our Lord's teaching about the kingdom; it is the connecting link which explains His earliest preaching: "Repent, *for* the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The coming of the kingdom is not a mere manifestation of God's power; not the inauguration of an order of things utterly alien to man's nature; rather it is the revelation of a system

¹ S. John v. 17; viii. 28, 38.

to which they already belong, a kingdom in which they are already citizens. That citizenship has been forgotten or obscured through sin; therefore they are to repent, and thereby make themselves fit to claim their inheritance. First, sin must be put away; and then they must also emancipate themselves from thralldom to any worldly tie which holds them back from effective membership in the one heavenly society to which they really belong. There must be no faltering or compromise in this matter. With open eyes they must count the cost and make their choice; by a supreme effort they must wrench themselves away from the lower in order to reach the higher; they must win freedom from the world and all that is in it, in order to receive the freedom of the kingdom of heaven. A man called to the kingdom must not even want to say good-bye to those at home, since no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. He must do violence to his habitual instincts; must hate his father and mother, and love his enemies; must offer his cloak to the man who has taken his coat; must deny himself; turn from love of riches, which is the service of mammon; renounce the delights and temptations of this world, plucking out his eye and cutting off his foot, if necessary, so as to avoid seeing vanity and walking in the way of the ungodly—just in order that, destitute and maimed and persecuted and despised, as far as this world goes, he may fit himself for the other world to which he belongs. He must empty himself of the partial, or inferior, or false, in order to be filled with what is true and perfect; he must renounce mammon, in order to win God; must lose his life,

in order to find it ; must die, in order to live. Such is Christ's call to men ; strong, emphatic, almost ferocious in its demands. He wants to make it quite clear that He is uttering no cheap moral platitudes, like the Scribes and Pharisees. By the sheer force and violence of His language He will make any minimizing interpretation of His teaching quite impossible ; He will force men to see that a real spiritual crisis, a parting of the ways, has come in their lives ; that they must either be with Him or against Him ; that the King's Son has come, and they must either be citizens in God's kingdom or rebels against the King.

And, as we suggested above, underlying all this teaching, and explaining it all, is His recognition of the grandeur of man's nature—a recognition which elsewhere expresses itself in His unfailing courtesy to the most stupid and ignorant of men, His discovery of germs of good in the publicans and harlots, His faith in the disciples whom He sends to do His work, even as He had done the work of the Father who had sent Him. Thus the severity of His claims, and severe they are beyond all question or comparison, is yet the severity of love. It is the sternness of one who sees the truth and cannot bear to see others shutting their eyes to it ; one who offers them Himself as the Bread of Life, and cannot bear to see them spending their labour on that which cannot satisfy.

This stern, unbending insistence on renunciation and detachment reveals one attitude of God in His relation to man. It is a claim urged with incomparable force by God incarnate upon His human

brethren, and, like all His teaching, endorsed by His example.

But, secondly, alongside of this uncompromising love of God there is revealed also His redeeming love. The claim made upon man surpasses man's power of obedience ; it is "the heroic for earth too hard ;" and therefore He who enforces it upon the sons of men will also help them to obey it. No jot or tittle is to fail of the demand itself, but men will be invested with a new power to fulfil it. It is their sins which drag them back from entrance into the kingdom ; then He will die with them in their sins and raise them in the power of His resurrection. He will give His life a ransom for many ; His blood will be shed for the remission of their sins ; and this Sacrifice of His, the Body broken and the Blood poured out, will be a holy food strengthening them for that which is demanded of them. The fierce struggle for emancipation from the world, the determined rejection of its usurped dominion over their souls, are not only required by God's inexorable love, but are made possible by His pitiful compassion. God incarnate enforces the claim in His teaching, illustrates it by His example, and renders it possible of fulfilment through His sacrifice on the cross and on the altar.

Thus we are led on insensibly from His teaching about God to the way of life which He propounds. The two subjects run into each other, since all His teaching about God, and especially His teaching about Himself, is so pre-eminently practical. He looks ever at God in His relation to men, and at men in their relation to God. His teaching about God is never

a lecture on theology. The world of nature is His schoolroom, and He addresses Himself not to man's mind alone, but to his whole nature, a nature which is busied about many things, but which will never be satisfied with anything short of God. And therefore His teaching about God *is* an exposition of the way in which man can attain to God. And this way can be very shortly expressed : it is Himself. He is the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by Him. Man's way of life, the life that can satisfy, is union with God through Christ. This is the sum of practical religion. The only thing to be added is that union with God through Christ becomes, at any rate in the first instance, union with God through Christ's Passion. As it is sin which has caused man to lose his true way of life, so it is through the ransom paid for sin, through the Blood shed for sin's remission, that he is brought back to it again. But further, and lastly, Christ's Passion is something to be not merely believed in, but received and appropriated and assimilated. Just as, in general, union with God through Christ is not effected simply by faith in Christ, but by membership or incorporation in Christ, so union with God through Christ's Passion does not mean simply faith in the efficacy of Christ's sufferings, but a reception of the Sufferer. People often juggle unconsciously with the terms *union* and *faith*. But faith is one thing, and union is another. Faith may be said to open the door to union, but it is in no sense itself union. If union with God the Father is our end, then union with the Son, not mere faith in Him, will be the means. Now, union with Christ, in the sense of general incorporation with Him, is effected in

Baptism ; and union with Christ, in the particular sense of participation in His sufferings, is effected in Holy Communion. Thus the way of life comes to be a sacramental way—a reception of sacraments, and an experience of their power and significance in a transformation of character.

This does not mean any sort of return to a cultus consisting in magical rites. The virtue of the sacrament implies that the human will co-operates with divine grace ; otherwise the reception of Christ will be as ineffective for us as His companionship was for Judas Iscariot. But it does mean that the way of life for a Christian requires the communication to him of a divine life which lifts him out of his natural self and makes him a new creature. And in the power of this divine life he is enabled to enter upon the rights and duties of his citizenship in the kingdom of God ; he receives strength to make his great renunciation of the world and of Satan as its prince. The stern demands of Christ are no longer too hard to be obeyed, for they represent no longer an alien voice sounding from without ; rather, they are the expression of a new life which is forming within, and which utters in these demands its own imperious claim to become the dominant fact, the ruling motive, of the man's existence. There is still a struggle ; but it is a struggle between the higher and the lower nature of the man himself. He, who could never have paid his debt, has been ransomed by Christ ; the Blood has been shed for his forgiveness ; and eternal life, the life of a citizen in God's kingdom, has become his own highest and truest life through the sacrament which conveys the power of that sacrifice to his own individual soul.

But what, more exactly, *is* the life of the kingdom of God, which he is thus enabled to live? We have considered what he is called upon to sacrifice in order to live it, namely, all that the natural man thinks worth living for. The sacrifice is tremendous; tremendous also the power which he receives in order to make it. But what is the life itself? The answer has to be gathered, in the main, from isolated sayings of Christ, who is more concerned to insist upon the demands which the kingdom makes than to describe in detail the life which its citizens are to lead. The fact that this is so seems to us strange. But the explanation is, that He was himself the embodiment of the kingdom to which men were called, and the example of the life which they were to live. If they followed Him they would understand these things; the crucial point was, that they should be prepared, and enabled, to make the sacrifice which the following of Him demanded. But He indicates quite clearly, though incidentally, some main characteristics of this life of the kingdom. Very significant in this connexion are the words spoken when His mother and brethren sought for Him. "Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."¹ As with Him, so should it be with His disciples; they were to find their true family ties in the society of those who did the Father's will.

1. Thus, a *widening of the area of sympathy and love*, to include all God-fearing people, is an essential mark of the life of the kingdom. Moreover, the words imply that the area of love is to be widened without any

¹ S. Matt. xii. 49, 50.

lessening of its intensity. Those who do God's will are not to be treated with respect or esteem or patronage, but to be loved with all the natural warmth of family affection. This is Christ's solution of the great crux of philanthropy. Ordinarily, the wider we make the circle of those to whom we recognize duties the colder grows the feeling with which we regard them. The butter comes to be spread very thin over that wide surface; and though we may not endorse Aristotle's dictum that, while a man must love his friends, his friends' friends have no claim upon him, at any rate our duty of befriending and loving a very large group of people is undertaken without much glow of personal affection. It is a matter in which the will rather than the feelings are concerned, and is apt to be conceived in a hard, cold, and censorious spirit. But in the kingdom of God the outside crowd is to be our own domestic circle; our attitude to them is to be one of real affection; and the affection is to be based on the fact that they are doing the will of the common Father. God is the Father of the family, and every one who is living as a child of God has an infeasible claim upon our love. The difficulty of conceiving family life in this sense, and "hating" every narrower conception which conflicts with it, is obvious enough. The selfishness which causes the difficulty can only be overcome through the mortification of self-will which results from feeding upon the sacrifice of Christ. But we have no right to gloss over and smooth away a plain duty as set forth by Him, merely in order to lessen the difficulty and get rid of the need of mortification.

And a still further widening of affection is set forth

in the Sermon on the Mount. We are to love not only all those who do the Father's will, but those who hate and persecute us—in a word, our enemies. And hereby the difficulty is enormously increased. The bond which unites us to religious people may be a weak one, but at any rate we can recognize and appreciate it readily enough. But now we are to extend affection to evildoers, and above all to those who do evil to ourselves. And the reason is given : "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."¹ If God, who has the right to discriminate, does good impartially to all, who are we that we should make distinctions and narrow the area of our affections and our prayers and our beneficence ?

And it is important to notice that the motive for this indiscriminate love is not (what according to Weiss it ought to be) the approaching end of the world, in view of which men are called upon to make a supreme, convulsive effort to get rid of all earthly attitudes and judgments, however right and necessary these attitudes and judgments might be for an abiding state of society. The motive is quite different ; it is found in the fact of [their translation into a wider family of all God's children, and their duty of acting up to their position in it. Their translation into that family does not imply the end of the world, but the end of worldly conceptions and ideals. The action required of them is perfectly compatible with an abiding state of society, provided that society can be reconstructed on God's lines.

¹ S. Matt. v. 45.

And here again the difficulty of fulfilling the law of this kingdom is no excuse for an attempt to whittle it away. Our affections *are* to go out to all mankind ; we *are* to love our enemies, and not merely accord them a cold self-righteous act of pardon.

Very difficult—yes ; so difficult that the merit of Christ's death and the power of His sacramental life may come at last to assume their true value in our eyes.

The one thing necessary is that we should take Christ at His word ; that we should believe that He means what He says ; that we should recognize that the kingdom of heaven to which He calls us in such imperious tones, and our entrance into which involves such sacrifices, both to Himself and us, is utterly and absolutely different from the kingdom of the world both in its actions and its motives. Life in the kingdom of heaven is not a snug, comfortable self-regarding existence, tempered by a respect for the proprieties and a fairly regular attendance at Sunday matins. People who insist on regarding it in this light naturally enough have to explain away our Lord's most plain and definite exposition, and naturally enough to ignore also the force and meaning of the Sacraments ; since such an existence can quite well be maintained without any felt need of the indwelling life of a crucified God. We must not wrest Christ's stern and impassioned rejection of the world into a comfortable and facile acceptance of it. The root-idea underlying all the eschatological symbolism was the great gulf between *this* world, corrupt and perishing, and *God's* world, to be substituted for it by a great

physical or spiritual revolution. If we insist on making an idol of ease and comfort, we are bound in common decency to dedicate it to some other name than that of Jesus Christ ; since the whole form and substance of His teaching, as well as the whole force of His example, must ever repudiate our action. In fact, the best course for the Church, if she is to speak with any spiritual authority in these days, is to confront a paganized Christendom with the authentic doctrine of Christ ; to accept that doctrine, and that only, for herself and her children, even if in doing so she seems to alienate three-fourths of her adherents.

A few consecutive verses give a trenchant expression to our Lord's real attitude to this worldly life, whether it calls itself by His name or not : "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I come not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."¹ The last words gain their significance from those that go before. Christ insists on a real battle, a real sacrifice, a real losing of the natural life ; these things can only be carried through by devotion to Him ; He is the motive of such action, and also its exceeding great reward.

¹ S. Matt. x. 34-9.

2. A second characteristic of life in the kingdom of heaven is its *spirituality*, in the sense of the purity of motive and the insight into the realities of religion which are to mark its citizens. The citizen of the kingdom is living in the immediate presence of God ; he must be looking straight at God, even as God is looking straight at him, in all that he does in God's name.

Such spirituality is universally recognized as necessary to the Christian religion ; we will only just glance at it in its opposition to certain equally familiar faults. First, then, it is a protest against *hypocrisy*, the hypocrisy of those who are pursuing their own private ends under colour of religion ; those who make the Father's house of prayer into a house of merchandise, and therefore a den of thieves ; of those who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers ; those who are beautifully whited sepulchres, full of uncleanness and corruption. And, secondly, this spirituality is a protest against *ceremonialism* ; ceremonialism which consists in a meticulous love of detail, playing on the surface of religion and never getting to the root of the matter at all ; which sometimes is actually a counsellor of sin, as when, in forbidding men to do good on the sabbath, it is really bidding them do evil ; and which buries the real meaning of religion under a mass of externalities, regarding a man as defiled by that which goes into his belly, not by that which comes out of his heart ; paying tithe of mint, anise, and cummin and neglecting judgment, mercy, and faith.¹ And under the head of ceremonialism comes the habitual and con-

¹ S. Matt. xxiii. 23.

ventional performance of actions which ought to be the expression of spiritual insight, but have come to be performed in a dead unintelligent routine; "*all these things have I kept from my youth up*"¹ may be perfectly true, and yet perfectly compatible with blindness to the principle involved.

In all these cases the world is apt to come between the soul and God, corrupting its motives and blinding its perceptions, even in its very acts of religious worship and religious duty.

The spirituality which is a mark of life in the kingdom of heaven will show itself not only in purity and sincerity of motive, but also in freedom, freshness, and insight in the practice of religion; qualities which our Lord displayed in every word and act, and which He requires also of all who follow Him.

3. And one further characteristic may be just alluded to—namely, the *zeal and energy* which are to be exhibited by the citizens. Our Lord compares His kingdom to a business firm, which requires that all who belong to it, whether small or great, whether directors or managers or clerks, shall exhibit not only integrity but keenness, resourcefulness, and activity in their work. "*Trade with it, till I come,*"² is the language of His commission to His servants given in the Parable of the Pounds. And the Parable of the Unjust Steward tells us that the children of light are to be as practical, smart, and businesslike in God's pure service as the hero of the parable was for his own private interests. The devil is not to monopolize the best powers of the will, leaving

¹ S. Matt. xix. 20.

² S. Luke xix. 13.

religion to consist in odds and ends of sentiment or speculation. Life in the kingdom is to be a strenuous life. The love of all mankind which is to be its objective is not to become a vague, watery emotion ; the spirituality which is its temper is not to degenerate into morbid introspectiveness. *Work* is to be added as a tonic or antiseptic ; zealous methodical work, such as commands success in ordinary business, but which is to be consecrated to God's service.

CHAPTER VIII

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

WE have maintained that Christ, as divine, had a perfect intuition into the things of God; that, in virtue of His human mind, this intuition expressed itself in current symbols; and that His revelation of God was intended to reveal a way of life whereby men could fulfil their ideal nature by living in communion with their heavenly Father. Now, as time went on and it proved necessary to form a permanent organization of the Christian community, the form in which this revelation was expressed necessarily underwent a change. A creed had to be drawn up, to supply a link of connexion between believers, and in this creed the pictorial imagery of Christ's teaching had to be translated into conceptual and doctrinal statements. The vision of the Son of Man, visibly destroying the power of Satan and victoriously inaugurating God's kingdom, became a belief in Christ's second advent as Judge of the world, together with a belief in His present coming through the Sacraments. "*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" applies equally to the original symbolic revelation and to the later statements of the Creed;

and the difference of expression does not carry with it any real difference of belief.

And as with symbolic teaching, so it was with the symbolic events by which truth was originally presented.

“Straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”¹

The imagery of these concomitants of Christ's baptism, together with the words in which He commanded the disciples to baptize others, is translated into the dogma of the Holy Trinity, in which imagery and command are expressed in the conceptual form which underlies them.

So, too, the symbolic imagery of the day of Pentecost, the sound of the wind and the sight of the tongues of fire, constitute “a vision, as S. Luke is careful to explain, but a vision which corresponded to a great spiritual fact which at the same moment accomplished itself in the experience of all who were present”;² and the doctrine of the work of the Holy Ghost was the appropriate interpretation of these symbols, together with the prophecies of Christ, into the language of theology.

Now, the translation of pictorial symbols with intellectual statements, or doctrines of theology, is attended by two serious dangers. In the first place, the forms or categories in which the intellect expresses itself are liable to change; and secondly, the

¹ S. Mark i. 10, 11.

² Professor Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 71.

work of the intellect, once called into existence, is liable to exceed due bounds and to convert a religion into a philosophy of the universe.

1. The language which the human intellect speaks must necessarily vary in accordance with the modes of thought, and ways of looking at things, current in each age or country; and there is a danger that the substance of its thought may change with the changed form in which it is expressed. For instance, the doctrine about Christ's Person came necessarily to be expressed in terms of Greek philosophy, which was the language of the cultured world, and there was a risk of the doctrine itself being radically transformed in the process. This particular risk was providentially averted; the doctrine maintained itself unimpaired, and refused to be absorbed into the system either of the Gnostics or of the Neo-Platonists. The Church employed the current Logos phraseology but adapted it to her own conception, just as Christ had used and transformed the apocalyptic phraseology of His time. But the danger is real and continually recurrent; it naturally becomes most acute when the intellect is allowed unduly to magnify its office; when, not content with expressing revelation in the form of doctrine, it inflates and expands doctrine far beyond the limits of revelation and transforms it into a system of universal knowledge. Whenever this takes place, the change of intellectual language becomes *ipso facto* a change of credal doctrine.

We proceed, then, to consider this second danger, in which the first is merged.

2. We need not join in any crusade against the intellect. The intellect has a valuable and necessary

part to play in religion. We do not want to make religion a matter of beautiful emotions, even if these emotions are combined with philanthropic endeavour ; it is not the same as either art or philanthropy, and cannot identify itself with either without committing suicide. Religion is religion ; it consists in an assured relationship with God, together with that which flows from such a relationship. And the relationship must rest on a basis of hard fact, accepted and formulated by the intellect. The work of the intellect in doing this is its primary function, and a most necessary one in connexion with religion. It has also a secondary and subsidiary function which will be considered later. Now, this primary and necessary use of the intellect in fixing the basal facts of religion is a truth which we cannot deny ; but we are wonderfully successful in distorting it. In practice we tend to make religion consist in either emotional sentiment or in a philosophy of the universe ; we tend, that is, to make the intellect either everything or nothing ; and in either case we are wrong. It is a common assumption of Romanists that, if we reject the idea of revelation as a cyclopædia of universal information, with the motto "Enquire within upon everything," we reduce it to a vague irrational sentiment, a sort of watery amiability which means well, but does not mean anything in particular.

But the real antithesis is not between dogma on the one hand and sentiment on the other, but between either dogma or sentiment on the one hand and a *life* of communion with God on the other ; between abstractions of some sort, either of feeling or of thought, on the one hand, and a concrete wholeness of

life on the other. The life of communion with God is the whole, the reality, the substance, in comparison with which all else is a partial element, a shadow, an abstraction. The life is that by which the sentiment of aspiration after God is justified, and enormously more than justified, through contact with its object ; and the life is that by which dogma is transformed into an attitude of loyal devotion to One who is both known and loved. In the unity of the life, feeling is rationalized and truth is humanized ; feeling is supported by a rational framework of bone and muscle, whilst the bare skeleton of truth is in its turn clothed in the flesh and blood of feeling. But religion is neither the bones nor the flesh and blood ; it is the life which implies both ; and uses both for its own transcendental purposes.

The primary function of the intellect, then, in formulating the basal facts of the Creed, is an early and necessary one. But when this is done, the intellect retires for a time to the background. When the few necessary facts have been accepted and set forth, the turn of the will has come, with its efforts after God, its resolute turning from everything that conceals Him, and its steadfast, dogged obedience to His commands.

And as these operations of the will come to be performed more perfectly, they will be increasingly tinged with emotion ; the will is gradually merged in love. And then, as religion thus becomes the very breath of a man's life, his intellect will be re-engaged in its elucidation. Having first fixed the basal facts of religion, and having then made way for the will and the emotions, it will now reappear in its secondary

and subordinate function. It will consider the vital truths of religion in their connexion with the other truths and aspects of the universe ; a philosophy of religion will be formed, and this philosophy will naturally be coloured by the particular stage at which culture and science happen to have arrived.

Thus we distinguish two main functions of the intellect in religion. First, there is its work in fashioning a creed, in which it simply tries to translate a symbolic and pictorial revelation into a body of systematic and balanced propositions. This revelation itself, with its symbols and pictures and images, was an expression of certain ineffable realities, of which Christ had alone an adequate intuition, and of which the disciples were enabled to enjoy a certain experience through their companionship with Him and the influence upon them of His character and teaching. The Creed, then, is an expression of revelation in terms of theology ; just as revelation is an expression of intuitive experience in terms of imagination. Both forms of expression are necessarily inadequate, and the theological expression is the more inadequate of the two. The work of the Spirit is more vividly expressed in the pictures of wind and fire than in the theological doctrine of His procession ; but both symbols and doctrine are faint adumbrations of the divine reality. Theology is necessary because, for purposes of teaching, truth must be expressed in a systematic and connected form, and also because there is a temptation to seize upon one vivid aspect of revelation as though it were the whole, and the temptation can only be overcome when its

different aspects are placed side by side in due balance and proportion. In the same way art criticism is necessary, in order that we may learn the truths conveyed in a picture, and learn them in their proper grouping and relationship to the central idea in the artist's mind. But the art critic must not go beyond that which is given him in his subject matter ; he must not parade his own cleverness or justify his own ingenuity by ascribing to the artist what is not to be found in the picture. He may combine and interpret, but he must not distort or exaggerate. In like manner theology must not go beyond what is given in revelation, understanding by revelation the teaching of Christ and the Apostles ; it too may combine and interpret, but not distort or exaggerate the aspects of revelation. Or, to recur to our earlier metaphor, in *translating* symbols into dogma it must give a true rendering—free, indeed, but faithful—of the text with which it is dealing. The one language must be loyally translated into the other without being enriched by the comments or glosses of the translator.

And, secondly, there is another function of the intellect, in which all sorts of comments and glosses may be fairly and rightly employed, namely, its secondary and subsidiary function in expanding and amplifying the basal facts of the Creed into a religious philosophy. This operation must be carefully distinguished from the earlier work in which the Creed itself is formulated in strict conformity to the text of revelation. Religious philosophy claims, or at any rate exercises, a much freer hand than can be allowed to theology. It gives a rough paraphrase, not a faithful rendering, of revelation ; it deduces conclusions

which may be involved in the premises of revelation but are certainly not stated there ; it aims at removing barriers and establishing relationships between religion and other human interests, and loves therefore to express the Creed in terms of the science and culture of the day ; it wishes to assign to religion its appropriate place in a general scheme or conception of the universe. And the work thus undertaken is not only an interesting but an inevitable one. The human reason is one, and insists on finding some sort of unity and connexion between its various conceptions and beliefs ; its religion must fit in somehow with its science and its ethics ; and unification is the great object of philosophy. But it is equally obvious that there is no finality in this philosophizing ; it is a work of varying complexion, temporary use, and relative validity. If it is to be the object of the Church to "marshal all truth, natural and revealed, into one harmonious whole," this will be a work which must be done over and over again, in proportion as natural truth develops and requires to be differently adjusted to divine.

Thus Tyrrell writes : "The faith is not like a foreign germ intruded into the mind, developing independently within itself, irrespective of the rest of our beliefs and experiences. Contrariwise, it works itself into the whole texture of our thought, determining it and being in return determined by it. Thus revealed truths, entering into combination with unrevealed, give birth to practical and speculative conclusions, which are part of Catholic, or at least theological, teaching, but not of divine faith."¹

¹ *Faith of the Millions*, i. p. 150.

As a matter of terminology, I prefer to use theology as the systematic statement of revealed truths : good theology is that which does not go beyond those truths ; bad theology is that which extends itself to include the total of practical and speculative conclusion, which really form the sphere of religious philosophy.

The identification of theology with religious philosophy is just the source of the difficulty with which modernism grapples. The difficulty arises when we insist that philosophical theorizings are necessarily and infallibly true, in the sense that they are the normal and necessary evolution of the original revelation made in and by our Lord ; that they *are* that primitive "deposit" once for all communicated to the saints, and of which the Church is the divinely appointed guardian. When the Roman Church takes up such an attitude, the greatest distress is inevitably caused to her most loyal sons. For they cannot help seeing that none of these philosophical systems are finally or infallibly true, being continually outgrown by the advance of science and thought, while it is even more obvious to them that such philosophies are not part of the original deposit. Only two courses are open to them, as Roman Catholics : either to ignore the basal facts and primitive Creed, and regard the faith as an organic idea which lives and grows like an oak-tree ; or to hold to the deposit, and attempt to *deduce* later systems of science and philosophy from those earlier premises. The former course sacrifices primitive truth—in a word, the past—to present and future developments, revelation being merged and lost

in those developments as the acorn is merged and lost in the oak. The second sacrifices the present to the past, only allowing us to believe as much science and history as can, by any power of interpretation, be elicited from the original revelation, or conversely demanding from us the make-believe that a comprehensive and progressive system of speculation does not go beyond the limits of that revelation.

In the second case we must hold (1) that every stage in the evolution of religious philosophy is the precise equivalent of the original revelation; and (2) that each such stage of philosophy must be carried on bodily in our own further progress. For instance, the Scholastic philosophy must be an accurate expression, without erring by excess or defect, of the Gospel revelation; and it must also be accepted in its entirety as the foundation of any fresh development of knowledge.

S. Thomas Aquinas believed exactly the same as S. Peter; and therefore the *Summa*, with its thirteenth-century conception of science, history, and psychology, must be accepted loyally and unreservedly by the Abbé Loisy and Father Tyrrell.

We get rid of these difficulties if we hold that the true function of theology is simply to formulate the various aspects of revelation in an intellectual form which translates the revelation into a different language but leaves its content essentially the same. The revelation itself as we have it in the New Testament is the standard by which the work of theology is tested and criticized. A theology, *e.g.*, the theology

of the Nicene Creed, that can pass this test is itself final and infallible with the finality and infallibility of the revelation of God in Christ.

On the other hand, a philosophy which combines the doctrines of the Nicene Creed with a mass of scientific and historical and ontological theories is not final or infallible, but subject to continual revision and correction.

It will be objected from the side of Father Tyrrell that this is only an Anglican makeshift; that what we distinguish as theology and philosophy are really the same thing; that the Nicene Creed differs from the original revelation in the same sort of way in which the Creed of Pius IV differs from the Nicene Creed; that even the Gospels were composed under the influence of theologico-philosophical prepossessions; and that the only thing which stands outside the variable process of theological or philosophic theorizings is, not the New Testament canon, but a certain experience of religion felt by Christ, and to a certain extent by those who came under His influence. Such an argument is capable of being urged with considerable force. Probably its main value in the eyes of those who use it is that it enables them, as they suppose, to retain the essence of revelation in the form of spiritual experience, and also to retain it in a form which shall be inaccessible to the assaults of criticism. But there are one or two things to be said against such a position. In the first place, religious experience, if it is to be anything more than a blank abstract feeling of infinity, must be focused upon some definite beliefs. In the case

of the earliest Christians it was focused on the belief that Christ was their divine Saviour and that His claim to be such was justified by His resurrection. If these articles of belief were either abandoned or regarded as inessential, the experience itself would fade and disappear. Christian experience, like Christian morality, grows out of Christian faith, and withers and dies when cut off from that which is its root.

And, secondly, a document like the Nicene Creed, in which these and similar beliefs are formulated, does indeed differ from the Gospel revelation in its mode of expression, but does not do so (as has often been shown) in the facts expressed. In this respect it differs *toto cælo* from subsequent formularies, and justifies us in regarding it as a true product of theology as distinguished from the varying systems of religious philosophy.

Lastly, to argue that the Gospel record itself, as opposed to pure spiritual experience, is already infected by philosophy and must therefore be classed with what is variable or shifting, shows a strange callousness to a very patent fact. Nothing is more striking than the resolute way in which speculation and controversy are excluded from the synoptic narrative. The writers believed indeed in Christ's divinity, but they set themselves to tell the story of His life with a grave simplicity which is not at all concerned with ideals of philosophy. It would have been well indeed if Strauss had done the same !

We return then to our position that the revelation of God in Christ is the final and perfect revelation,

since it rests on a clear unsurpassable intuition into the things of God ; that this revelation has not been impaired by being stored in the earthen vessels of the theology of the Creed ; and that in the religious philosophies of successive ages revelation has been worked into union with a growing and variable body of general knowledge. No doubt Christian doctrine has suffered sometimes in this process of amalgamation. Sometimes it got on to unprofitable or erroneous lines, and had to retrace its steps, as, for instance, in the extreme Augustinian doctrine of grace ; often it has erred through reluctance to confess its ignorance of things not revealed, and has undergone an over-luxuriant growth which has had to be subsequently pruned. But this fact at any rate shows that the "Christian idea" was not a seed that had to grow and expand in one fixed direction in accordance with its inexorable *ratio seminalis*. Christianity is not an organism ; the facts of its history reject such a thing with complete decision. On the other hand, the facts harmonize admirably with the notion of a divine Spirit striving with the wayward wills and hasty generalizations of the sons of men, patiently correcting their mistakes, gently leading them to the pastures of the Plain of Truth, but never completely overruling their innate capacity for error. There has always been a large measure of aberration and exaggeration and forgetfulness, but the work of the Spirit, whilst it has not led man blindfold and made blunders impossible, has helped him to retrace false steps, to cut down redundancies and supply defects, and in that way (a way analogous to His other dealings with mankind) is guiding him into truth as age follows age.

And if this is true of speculation concerned directly with divine things, it is all the more true of those scientific or logical principles with which such speculation has associated itself in the endeavour to fashion a comprehensive theory of the universe. The religious ideas of the Middle Ages, combined with the current culture of the time, issued in the philosophy of Scholasticism. The religious ideas of to-day, combined with the dominant conception of evolution, issue in a philosophy of a markedly immanent, and sometimes pantheistic, complexion. We are not bound by the Scholastic philosophy; and our successors may be trusted to deal faithfully with our own quasi-pantheistic philosophizings. "What have we to do with 'genera' and 'species'?" exclaims Thomas à Kempis at the close of the Scholastic period. And the answer is: Nothing, except so far as they helped people at the time to form a connected idea of God's work. "What have we to do with 'natural selection' and 'subliminal uprushes'?" may soon be the question. And again the answer is: Nothing, except so far as they have helped to fit revelation into the context of present-day science and thought. Thinkers in every age must form their own "*Welt-Anschauung*," or connected conception of the universe, and, if they are Christians, must bring the Christian revelation into relationship with the rest of their ideas. The system of barbed-wire fences and water-tight compartments, separating religion from any contact with other subjects of study, is mercifully discredited. Religion, if it is to exist at all, must be felt throughout; it must run like a golden thread through the

texture of our philosophy, must come to terms with it, and find its context there. If this philosophy, by its whole meaning and tendency, rejects the Christian revelation, we must modify our view of one or the other. If on the other hand the two schemes prove compatible and friendly, a union will be effected, and we shall clothe the Christian revelation in the current terms of our philosophy. But, however satisfied we may feel with our handiwork, we shall recognize that after all it is an amalgam; and that, though revelation is capable of being expressed in the categories of our day, it is not the least in the world committed irrevocably to them. The partnership can be dissolved and a fresh one entered into. As long as a man feels that he is made in God's image, and that this conviction is divinely confirmed by Christ, the Gospel will continue to claim recognition and belief; and the recognition will be given in a philosophical form, as the reason affirms and re-affirms the substance of the Gospel in the dialect of successive ages of culture and knowledge.

The religious philosophy of past generations is dreary reading, because the gold of the Gospel is, in the interests of apologetic, mingled with the dross of some scientific system which is now discredited and out of date. It was a work that needed to be done at the time, and now needs to be done again, in order that revelation may enter to-day into a changed environment. The books that finally survive are those in which loving hearts have made their direct response to the Gospel, gold mingling with gold, and have left others to do the necessary philosophizing for them. The Con-

fessions of S. Augustine will be fragrant when the philosophizings of S. Augustine have lost their savour ; and the "Imitation" of one Thomas will be loved and cherished when the "Summa" of another Thomas is forgotten.

We owe a real debt of gratitude to Father Tyrrell for the fearlessness and brilliancy of his championship of this general position. His task was harder than ours. For as a Romanist he had to accept *de fide* a great many late dogmatic decisions which are not binding on the Anglican conscience ; that which was theology for him is philosophy for us. He struggles loyally to make distinctions, to accept the "protective value" of these decisions, as safeguards of the original revelation, whilst rejecting their "proper significance" as asserting discredited dicta of bygone science. But if these decisions are all identical with the original revelation, if this complicated congeries of antiquated philosophies is the exact counterpart of the teaching of Christ, they are themselves invested with all its infallibility, and the process of dissection and discrimination must be condemned as heresy.

The old Anglican motto, "The Church to teach and the Bible to prove," has an enduring value. The Church must do her teaching ; must present the Gospel as best she can in the phraseology of each generation ; must commend it to the minds and consciences of men in language as persuasive and acceptable as possible.

But the Bible must prove—the Church must submit all her expositions to be tested by that unalterable revelation of God in Christ ; the speculations which she

successively evolves to meet the needs of each coming age must be judged by the "deposit" of which she is the appointed custodian. She may and ought to be an eloquent and subtle interpreter, if she is also a loyal and honest guardian.

CHAPTER IX

THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH ON EXPERIENCE

I N the last three chapters we have considered the debt which our knowledge of God owes *directly* to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and we have found that the revelation which He Himself gives us consists mainly in a doctrine of God and a way of life. These two subjects, as we have seen, mutually involve each other; our Lord teaches us about God just in order that we may live lives of godliness; and on the other hand, the life of citizens in God's kingdom can only be lived in the faith of God and through the help of a divine redemption. We have seen, further, that the revelation of Christ, conveyed mainly in symbolical teaching and symbolic happenings, was translated into the theological statements of the Creed without any essential change in its substance, and that in reciting the Creed we are stating our belief in certain permanent and unchangeable truths revealed by Him.

But we have a feeling that the acceptance of these truths, even a *bona fide* and reasoned acceptance of them, falls short of what we mean by religious knowledge; that it would be quite possible for a man to

have a full appreciation of the various aspects of truth which are brought together in the balanced statements of the Creed, and to be able and willing to defend them with the learning of a Bishop Bull, without possessing what it would be right to call a knowledge of God at all.

And this feeling is perfectly just. But when we go on to ask, What is the defect? and how is it to be remedied? two different answers may be given.

In the first place, it may be said that the Creed, as it stands, is too *narrow* in its area; that a true knowledge of God can only be got by widening our sphere of thought, embracing a larger horizon, bringing religion into connexion with other truths, expanding our Creed into an articulated view of the universe, including God as its central principle. When that is done, we are told, we shall be in touch with God always and everywhere, in such close and constant touch that we shall feel that we have attained to a real knowledge of Him, such as the Creed itself cannot give us owing to its restriction of interest and narrowness of outlook.

We have considered this process of expanding our Creed into a philosophy, and have found that it is a process both necessary and interesting, and also a profitable one, provided that we always remember that it has no finality about it and must never be invested with the infallibility which belongs to the revelation and its creed. But it is not quite in this direction that we have to look for a method of turning the acceptance of a creed into the knowledge of God. The real defect which attaches to such an acceptance of the creed is, not that it is too *narrow*,

but rather that it is too *shallow*. The truths which we there recite do not penetrate deeply enough into our own nature. They are intellectually approved and accepted ; but, as far as that goes, they are still surface truths ; and it is only when they have sunk down and become central or vital truths that they can be fairly said to contain a knowledge of God. And if this is the real defect, we can see that a widening of the area of our conception, such as is proposed by philosophy, is likely to increase rather than diminish the shallowness of which we complain.

The remedy lies, not in making our conception of God more general and diffuse, but in making it more penetrating and incisive. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart."¹ These qualities which mark God's knowledge of us must mark also our knowledge of God, if it is to be worthy of the name. It must not play on the outside of our mind, but must cut its way down to the meeting-point of soul and spirit, and take possession of all the thoughts and intents of the heart. In other words, faith does not become knowledge of God until it has effected some sort of union with experience.

God is known, not by the isolated intellect, but in the spiritual life ; and spiritual life is a combination of faith and experience. Just as, in our Lord's teaching, the doctrine of God was always kept in closest connexion with the way of life, a life of

¹ Heb. iv. 12.

communion with God ; so we can see that faith, or the acceptance of the Creed, must be in the closest connexion with spiritual experience ; and, indeed, that the highest value of faith lies in the power of stimulating and guiding this experience. Experience thus resting on faith, and in turn verifying it, is that which deserves to be called a knowledge of God, as distinct from knowledge *about* Him or His attributes and modes of action.

And this principle was largely operative in the minds of those who drew up the Creed. Disbelief was combated, not simply as error or defective logic, but as an obstacle to communion with God. Communion with God and knowledge of God are two aspects of the spiritual life. Communion with God presents the spiritual life from the side of experience ; knowledge of God presents it from the side of faith. Without faith, experience could never be *religious* experience, or communion with God ; and without experience, faith could never rise to be *knowledge* of God. In the next few chapters, then, we are to consider first the influence of faith on experience ; and secondly, the influence of experience on faith. We are to look at faith awakening experience and supplying it with a definite goal and motive ; and then at experience reacting upon faith and reconstructing its dogmas as vital principles.

In the first place, then, faith must act as a stimulus and guide to experience. One of the greatest benefits we receive from the Creed is that it strengthens our hold upon God and develops our religious experience. People commonly assume that religious faith consists in holding an intricate and complicated

system of beliefs, which says the last word on all possible objects of investigation; and further that their work as believers consists in pitting their own cyclopædia of general information against those of other people. The real process is both simpler and more difficult. Faith has first to shine within us, giving light to all the blind gropings, the immature instincts, the faltering affirmations, which are the chaotic fragments of a spiritual nature; all the hopes, questionings, presentiments, doubts, aspirations, which, at the shining of that light, are to come to a knowledge of themselves, and find their own meaning and value as a living experience of God. In the light and fire of this experience, faith itself will be purified and chastened, and will emerge from it as a knowledge of God. Then, and not till then, will it be in a position to say anything as to the beliefs of other people.

At first, faith need not be more than the acceptance of a few central facts of revelation. These will be sufficient to illuminate and justify that primitive, deep-seated instinct of kinship with God which we recognized at the beginning as the raw material of religion, and which we saw giving expression to itself in an imperfectly understood ritual of sacrifice and communion. Such a faith, again, will be sufficient to illuminate and justify the obstinate conviction that the values which we blindly pursue and cherish are perfectly realized and eternally conserved in Him who is the Word and Wisdom of the Father.

What an unlimited opening does faith thus provide for the development of religion; for the garnering of religious experience in prayer and meditation; for

the confident quest of the true, the beautiful, and the good; for the practice of fellowship with all who share the clansmen's sacrificial feast and are pledged thereby to mutual service!

Let us illustrate this from the case of S. Paul. The faith with which S. Paul started was not a complicated or elaborate thing. It centred round two facts, the death and the resurrection of Christ. Faith in these facts was quite sufficient to kindle and develop a spiritual experience as deep and rich in its passionate intensity and its steady persistence as any such experience which is recorded in history. The sufferings of Christ were made a personal experience of his own;¹ he always bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus; in the cross of Christ the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world;² he was crucified with Christ, and nevertheless was living; yet not he, but Christ was living in him.³

And the union with Christ, though at first it had to be a union with His death, was also a union with His resurrection. He had a new mysterious life hidden with the risen Christ in God;⁴ to win Christ, and be found in Him, to know Him and the power of the Resurrection, was the object of his life, for the attainment of which he suffered the loss of all things,⁵ being confident that if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.⁶

And in the fire of this spiritual experience his own

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

² Gal. vi. 14.

³ Gal. ii. 20.

⁴ Col. iii. 3.

⁵ Phil. iii. 8-10.

⁶ Rom. v. 10.

death is transfigured before his eyes; to die would be sheer gain, since to die was to depart and be with Christ.¹ And in the meantime the love of Christ was his constraining motive; to live was Christ, and therefore life must be work for Christ, or rather, Christ living and working within His servant.² This life of profound and passionate experience, a life of love and devotion, drove him as the slave of Christ from land to land;³ everywhere he was placarding Christ crucified before the eyes of men; entreating them to be reconciled to God through Him; travailing in birth of them until the Christ who dwelt in him should be also formed in them.⁴

If we ask how it comes about that credal facts are thus transmuted into spiritual experience, we can only answer that it is done by associating the will and the affection with the intellect, which has accepted these facts, and by focusing the three capacities, thus united, upon the facts in question. And we must add, as was suggested before, that the will and the affections will be most prominent in the creation of experience. The intellect will be somewhat in the background; for it has accomplished its primary work in accepting and formulating the main facts of Christ's life and teaching, and is not yet occupied with its secondary function of expanding its convictions into a system of religious philosophy. In the meantime the will and the affections will be acting together upon the facts submitted to them, the will attempting to make them into a personal rule of life, so that the man may by his obedience be living the "lordship of God's

¹ Phil. i. 21-3.

³ Gal. iii. 1.

² 2 Cor. v. 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv. 19.

only Son," and by his patience may be living the "sufferings under Pontius Pilate"; whilst the affections gradually turn obedience and patience into love, and find occasion of glorying and joy in the painful fellowship with Christ. But first the will must be prepared to work almost alone, since under the pressure of temptation the intellect's hold upon truth will be loosened, and the affections, insufficiently purged, will be fixed on other satisfactions. But if the man is in grim earnest, if he is content to walk steadily through the valley of the shadow of death, the chilly gloom will be gradually relieved by the light of truth and the warmth of love; and when this happens, when the three capacities, sundered for awhile, are reunited in a common service, when the whole nature of the man is offered and presented to Him in whom he believes, then spiritual experience begins: the bread of affliction becomes the living bread, even Christ Himself, the Lord, the Creator, the Friend, the indwelling Life of the Soul.

On these lines spiritual experience is within the reach of all who are in earnest; but there will naturally be many different degrees of it. In some people it will be a tranquil assurance of God's love, enabling them to possess their souls and live their lives in quietness and confidence. In others it will be a contemplative communion with God in the different kinds of spiritual prayer. Or again, here and there a spiritual genius will arise to whom a more direct converse with God is vouchsafed through voices or visions inwardly apprehended, or who soars above even such spiritual converse into moments of essential and ineffable contact with his Creator.

One law, however, seems fairly clear—namely, that bodily suffering is a condition of the highest exaltation of the spirit. It was so with S. Paul, “Lest I should be exalted above measure,” he says, “through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”¹

The Apostle states as the final cause of such suffering “lest I should be exalted above measure”; and we can see also in psychology a secondary cause. Just as some neural processes are a necessary condition of there being any conscious thought or feeling at all, we can understand that a very highly strung, sensitive, abnormal nervous system, with great liability to suffering, may be a necessary condition of this particular exceptional class of thoughts and feelings. Physical suffering and weakness will be a condition of the highest spiritual experiences; and, conversely, such experiences will naturally tend, by their very vehemence and exacting nature, to increase the bodily suffering. And all this is very natural.

The powers, mental and physical, of our organization have come to be so highly specialized, have been, that is, so exclusively directed to the external visible world, that they are “out of practice” with spiritual work, and suffer pain and discomfort in attempting to perform it. The organism that can respond at all readily to spiritual forces will be an “abnormal” one; nerves and fibres, which heredity has made slack, will throb with pain when they are, in these abnormal cases, brought into tune with heavenly melodies; and again, the abnormality and tension

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 7.

and pain will increase as they are used in this unearthly music.

And just as anyone who is vitally interested in religion is commonly regarded by the world as certainly eccentric and probably mad, so the case of any person who is receptive of special spiritual experiences, at the expense of bodily pain, is commonly regarded as a pathological one.

Certainly we have no reason to pity such people.

Would S. Paul or either of the Italian S. Catherines have consented to forego their exalted communion with God as the price of relief from their physical ailments? It is utterly impossible to conceive such a thing. They were content that the fire of God's love should scorch them, like some new Phaethon, through the nearness of their approach to Him; that, like the soul of Gerontius, they should be "consumed, yet quickened by the glance of God."

And as we reflect upon their subject matter, these abnormal experiences fall into their place. Ordinary spiritual experience is gained by reflection upon the revelation of God in Christ, a reflection through which His character or sufferings become able to inspire our own wills and inflame our own affections. In these special cases, what we find is not so much reflection on revelation as some sort of supplementary revelation. The Christ who revealed Himself, and thereby revealed God, to His disciples, reveals Himself again to these chosen souls. They not only think about Him and adore Him, and meditate upon the record of His revelation to others, but actually hear Him and see Him by some mysterious immediacy of spiritual intuition. How exactly this takes place, we do

not know. We have alluded above to what seems a general, if not universal, physiological condition, namely, nervous suffering, which is also a humbling discipline to ward off spiritual pride. There may be also a psychological condition in that storing of impressions in the subconscious area of the mind, whence they sometimes emerge with startling force and reality in the form of clairvoyance or clair-audience.

In certain specially pure and receptive natures the act of meditation may, apart from its intrinsic worth, be thus warehousing its thoughts and aspirations in that dim mental receptacle, or rather planting them in that fruitful seed-plot ; and when they have grown and flourished there, they may suddenly blossom into consciousness as the hearing of the voice or the seeing of the form of Him whom their souls desire. In that case religious genius will exhibit the same characteristics which Mr. Myers finds in other kinds of genius. And it must be observed that we no more disparage the reality of such experiences by pointing to such conditions than we disparage the reality of ordinary thoughts of love and devotion by pointing to the tremors in the brain-substance which are their physical condition. Why should not a pure sincere soul like Julian of Norwich receive her own revelation of divine love in addition to her meditation on a revelation made to others ? But, it will be asked, is there no difference between these abnormal experiences, which science has until lately dismissed as hallucinations, and the experiences of the disciples who conversed with Christ on earth ? Are both equally revelations of God in Christ ? We answer

that both may very well be revelations, but that they differ enormously in their degrees of clarity and purity.

It is one thing to see a man and hear his voice in ordinary bodily utterance, another to hear and see him in some vivid spiritual experience. The fact may be just as real in the latter case; but in the latter case the voice or vision tends inevitably to mingle with the accompanying jetsom of the stream of consciousness, and to associate itself with alien elements, which render the experience itself adulterated and ambiguous; whilst additional vagaries and uncertainties are introduced in the processes of recollection and expression. And, further, the temperament of the person concerned will often colour and distort the communication which is made. The visions of S. Gertrude or S. Catherine Emmerich are largely affected by this cause. Such experiences as theirs would seem to be analogous to cases of erratic genius, where the subliminal uprush is wild and incoherent. We can conceive that in the case of these saints the ideas and conceptions stored in the subconscious tract have been mingled with certain morbidities and vanities which have clung to them in their ascent to the area of consciousness. On the other hand, when we meet with a person like S. Teresa, sane and sensible, and protected by real humility and a saving sense of humour and power of self-criticism, the substantial truth of the revelation is well established. S. Teresa clearly and firmly lays down certain criteria of truth. She can distinguish, for instance, the vision from an ordinary imagination by the strength and permanence of the impression;

from a delusion or an operation of malign powers by its uplifting and tranquillizing effects, and so forth. Such revelations, we feel, are real and valuable items of religious experience, enormously significant to those who receive them, and full of encouragement to others. We may be quite clear and emphatic about that, whilst at the same time their necessarily fugitive and elusive character makes us also feel the necessity for a more clear and unambiguous foundation of our faith, such as we possess in the record of God's revelation of Himself in the human life of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible.

We have thus considered the formation of religious experience both in the more ordinary shape in which it is accessible to any sincere and humble soul and in the more exceptional forms under which it comes to exceptionally constituted natures. The factors of this religious experience are, first, faith in some central facts of the Creed, and secondly, a group of natural instincts, tendencies, aspirations, and temperamental qualities.

These form the raw material of experience ; faith works them up into religious experience—experience of God. Apart from faith, they would issue in *some* specific sort of experience, some personal attitude to the universe, some way of looking at things, more or less forcible according to their energy and vitality. In themselves they are blind, and need the guidance of a leading idea. If that leading idea is non-religious, they will be secular, though perhaps also poetical or imaginative, in their embodiment. When faith is the leading idea, they become experiences of God, or

communion with God ; and this experience or communion is knowledge of God viewed on its more affective side.

But, further, this religious experience will now in its turn react upon the faith, under whose guidance it was developed. The credal facts, which occasioned the formation of religious experience, will emerge from its furnace in a very different form, and be grasped in a more vital and personal apprehension than before. This faith, vitalized by experience, will be religious knowledge viewed on its more intellectual side. The vitalizing of faith, analogous to the spiritualizing of experience, will be the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPERIENCE ON FAITH

WE have seen that a few simple historical facts and items of Christ's teaching suffice to stimulate and guide experience and to fashion it into an experience of God. And now from the crucible of spiritual experience the early revelation of fact and doctrine emerges in the form of personal convictions, which are profoundly and intimately true, not only in the sense of expressing that which is revealed, but also as an epitome of what has been lived through and has been verified in experience. And these convictions will be expressed in language which still glows and burns in the heat of the spirit; in it the man sums up that which Christ, who originated the experience, has come to be to him as the result of the experience. And this means an immense deepening and advance in our knowledge of God. The vital convictions which come out of the furnace of experience are substantially the same as the original credal facts, only spiritualized, intensified and quickened; no longer a theme for argument, but truths of which the man has the witness in himself.

This can be best shown by some examples. Here

again let us take S. Paul. We have seen that the credal facts with which he started were the death and resurrection of Christ. We have seen also how he wrestled with these facts in the throes of his conversion, and how they gave birth in him to a spiritual experience of unsurpassed vividness and profundity. And now out of that experience there rises a vital and comprehensive doctrine of the Person of Christ as the centre of the whole universe of truth ; as one who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation ;¹ who is before all things, and in whom all things consist ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The sufferings of Christ, which spiritual experience had enabled him to appropriate and share, become a doctrine of redemption and renewal. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."²

And the redemption, which strikes off the fetters of sin, issues in the principle of spiritual liberty. "Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."³ And so the Galatians are exhorted to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had set them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage."⁴ And the Colossians are met with the indignant question :— "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the

¹ Coloss. i. 15 and 17 ; ii. 3 and 9.

² 2 Cor. v. 21 and 19.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 17.

⁴ Gal. v. 1.

world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"¹ Again the death of Christ, grasped in its fullness by the Apostle's own experience, becomes a doctrine of the solidarity of mankind, and a bond of union between Jew and Gentile. "We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead."² And He who died for all thereby "broke down the middle wall of partition; having abolished in His death the enmity; . . . for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."³

And, lastly, the risen life of Christ yields a confident belief in the resurrection of His faithful people: "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."⁴

In all these cases we see how the Apostle's faith emerged from the furnace of spiritual experience as a personal, vital inspiration.

He had learnt the facts before, but now he learns them over again, and finds in them a wider meaning, a fire, and a force, and a self-evidence which has made them something new.

S. Augustine, again, at the time of his conversion had accepted intellectually the whole Creed as preached by S. Ambrose, though with some linger-

¹ Col. ii. 20.

² 2 Cor. v. 14.

³ Eph. ii. 14-16.

⁴ Rom. viii. 11.

ing dislike of the simplicity of the Gospel language. And then the fire of that conversion, and of the experience which followed it, transformed for him the things of God into one rushing, molten stream of divine grace, which works with effectual, irresistible force upon those whom God predestinates to glory. The faith, accepted at last after so many struggles, was assimilated by a genius and temperament of extraordinary power and intensity, and emerged from the crucible as a doctrine of divine grace and human sin.

Once more, the facts with which S. Francis of Assisi started were the facts of Christ's earthly ministry, in which He went about doing good, had loved the children and the flowers and the lepers, and had sympathized, even to death, with the outcasts and the sinners. And the outcome of his belief in these facts, when they had been whole-heartedly embraced by his loving and simple nature, was a vivid faith in the oneness of God's universe and a sense of fellowship with all creation, as the joyous privilege of those who had killed their narrow selfishness and pride upon the cross of Christ.

We have dealt above with cases in which faith in the Christian revelation has been enriched and transfigured by passing through the fire of spiritual experience. Next we may notice how experience modifies, and indeed transforms, the popular tradition on subjects which have not been defined in the Creed. Opinions and assumptions on a multitude of such subjects are handed on from one generation and received blindly by another without criticism or

revision ; and it is a remarkable fact that, when an alteration is effected, it arises far more frequently from the side of spiritual experience than from the side of intellectual discussion. In matter of fact the intellect seems to be numbed and paralyzed in the face of unanimous popular assent in such matters ; the only force that dares deal freely with it is the insight of religious life. The heart which has striven with God in prayer and meditation has knowledge and authority in matters which the intellect is content to leave unquestioned. A good example of this is the conception of punishment, and the modifications introduced into it by S. Catherine of Genoa.¹ For centuries before the time of this saint (who was born in 1447 and died in 1510) popular opinion, as was natural in a semi-barbarous age, had been dominated by crude and savage conceptions on the subject. It had gloated over the torments of the lost, and its view of purgatory had centred upon the sheer suffering inflicted by the retributive justice of God. Any idea of the growth of the soul in knowledge and love, or of the gracious leading of God underlying all such growth, had been logically excluded, although it ought to have been the leading idea, if purgatory was to effect in any way a purgation of the soul. But S. Catherine, whose religious experience was grounded upon her devotion to the Holy Eucharist, brought the light of divine love into these dark places. Her doctrine of purgatory, which inspired the *Dream of Gerontius* in a later age, is permeated

¹ It is hardly necessary to refer to Baron von Hugel's magnificent work, *The Mystical Element in Religion, as Studied in S. Catherine of Genoa and her Friends*.

from beginning to end by a doctrine of love; the love of God, who is drawing the soul to Himself; and the love of the suffering soul, which chooses and welcomes the expiation of its sin, regarding this expiation as simply the removing of a coating of rust which, whilst it remains, keeps God away from contact with itself.

Thus joy and pain are inextricably blended in purgatory. "I do not believe it would be possible," she writes, "to find any joy comparable to that of a soul in purgatory, except the joy of the blessed in paradise—a joy which goes on increasing day by day, as God more and more flows in upon the soul, which He does abundantly in proportion as every hindrance to His entrance is consumed away. The hindrance is the rust of sin; the fire consumes the rust, and thus the soul goes on laying itself open to the divine inflowing."

"The instinctive desire of seeking happiness in God develops itself, and goes on increasing through the fire of love, which devours it to its end with such impetuosity and vehemence that any obstacle seems intolerable; and the more clear its vision, the more extreme its pain." "Thus, with regard to purgatory, when the soul leaves the body and finds itself out of that state of purity in which it was created, seeing the hindrance, and that it can only be removed by purgatory, without a moment's hesitation it plunges therein: and were there no such means provided to remove the impediment, it would forthwith beget within itself a hell worse than purgatory, because by reason of this impediment it would see itself unable to reach God, its last end; and this

hindrance would be so full of pain, that, in comparison with it, purgatory would not be worth a thought.”¹

And the same penetrative spiritual insight is brought to bear on the state of the lost: “The punishment of the damned is not, indeed, infinite in amount, for the sweet goodness of God sheds the rays of His mercy even in hell. A man who has died in mortal sin deserves a punishment infinite in pain and infinite in duration; but God in His mercy has made it infinite only in duration, and has limited the amount of pain. He might most justly have given them a far greater punishment than He has.”²

When we consider the age, still somewhat barbarous, in which S. Catherine of Genoa lived, we can appreciate the greatness of the revolution which she effected. The traditional conception of hell, with its mixture of savagery and buffoonery, has been finally vanquished; and the thought of “the sweet goodness of God,” which won the victory, proceeded from the depths of the saint’s own spiritual experience.

We may also notice the way in which experience modifies the *form* in which religious truth is envisaged. Faith, in its early, unreflecting phase, makes free use of space and time in its expression of religious truth. God is *in* heaven, and heaven is a place; and we hope to go there *some time*, and so forth.

These are very natural, and, in their way, perfectly legitimate modes of expression; but as spiritual experience deepens they undergo a considerable transformation. Heaven becomes a state rather than a

¹ *Treatise on Purgatory*, Burns and Oates, pp. 6, 10, 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

place. Christ's Ascension does not mean a separation in space, but a resumption by Him of purely spiritual conditions, an absorption of the material element involved in His visible earthly life into the spiritual nature which had always been His.

So far as spacial ideas still cling to our notion of heaven, it comes to signify any place where Christ is. Hades becomes paradise when Christ is there; heaven is in the soul when Christ is there. And further reflection makes the further amendment that, as Christ is everywhere, heaven is the success of the soul in uniting itself to Him—a success partial here and complete hereafter. One may say, in the words of Plotinus, “He does not exist in an attenuated form in space; He is present to those who are able to touch Him, absent from those who are not able.”¹

And so it is with time. Spiritual experience tends to substitute the conception of eternity for that of succession. Spiritual life is not so much something to be attained at the end of a long period, as something possessed now in the possession of Christ. The other line of thought is not, indeed, abolished; it cannot be ignored without severe loss. There is such a thing as sequence, and progress, and improvement, and achievement; there is such a thing as historical development and a struggle of forces, with varying results, both in the individual and in the race; there is worth in the solidarity of people helping each other in that development. *Faith* will always have its function to perform in setting the final goal of progress before the mind. But the alternative conception, first made manifest by *experience* alongside

¹ *Enneads*, p. 765 c.

of its competitor, is now more clearly indicated in the emphasis laid upon the value of the individual in his awful isolation; the presence (here and now) of eternity and perfection behind the fleeting, evanescent flux of becoming; the unity, in God and in the soul possessing God, of divers elusive hints of value which are scattered like snowflakes through the sequence of history; union with God as something complete in each moment, not something which grows to completion by the addition of unit to unit.

These two conceptions, associated respectively with faith and experience, supplement each other. To accept one to the entire exclusion of the other is disaster.¹ To adopt the conception of eternity to the exclusion of time ends in a doctrine of absolutism, which makes God a static centre of all truth, entirely removed from the contingencies of history. In that case there is no purpose or significance in the world-movement, and no possibility of *attaining* to a knowledge of God; no *action* from the side of God upon the world—nothing but contemplation by Him of His own perfection.

And on the other hand, to insist exclusively on the time element leads to-day to a pragmatic modernism which makes God the creature of human progress, a changing ideal representing the changes in our own thoughts and aspirations; so that the truth about God is just that conception which from time to time we find useful and inspiring.

When, therefore, we say that experience lays special

¹ With all respect to Professor Höffding, "both . . . and," is a truer formula than "either . . . or," in the complex matter of religious knowledge. (See his *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 45 seq.).

emphasis on the one conception, we do not mean to imply that the other conception, emphasized by faith, is ignored or denied. The whole purpose, indeed, of this essay is to insist that faith and experience, with the conceptions appropriate to each, supplement each other as correlative aspects of spiritual life.

Lastly, individual or racial characteristics will appear in the convictions which result from experience. Just because they are vital convictions, they will necessarily be coloured by the distinctive dye which marks distinct temperaments. When a man's temperament is expansive, sociable, sympathetic, his convictions will express a large and easy fellowship with all things human and divine, a consciousness of countless links and affinities in the social and cosmic spheres, a homely and sometimes a free-and-easy attitude to the universe, all tending in the direction of pantheism. On the other hand, if his temperament is introspective, reverent and reserved, his philosophy will breathe a spirit of aloofness and isolation, other-worldliness, detachment, a keen sense of sin and incompleteness—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"—a general tendency towards a deistic view of religion.

And corresponding to differences of envisagement based on differences of individual temperament we have similar differences of national religion based on racial characteristics, climate, or geographical position. The religious philosophy of the Latin races, evolved under the influences of a Spanish sky

or an Italian landscape, will be very different from that of the northern Teutonic nation. And within the latter, the Germanic race, there are, as Professor Horstman points out, strongly marked differences between the Franks and the Saxons.

We will quote some words of his because they give a most suggestive account of "tribal" varieties which inevitably tend to yield varieties of religious expression. "The Frank in his contact with kind is gregarious, social, the Saxon solitary and shy; he segregates from the mass and builds his homestead away from the crowd, and his home is his world. So the Saxon develops a strong individuality, while the Frank disappears in the kind. But the Frank's kindness to kind is rewarded by Nature's kindness to him, in the 'benigna naturæ vena' of expression. His placid mind, relieved from internal conflicts, becomes expressive, eloquent, easy of word, facile of form, artistic; it can dwell on its conceptions, shape and mould them in ease, and stay till the last finish is attained; he possesses eminently the sense of form and beauty. The Saxon, kept from satisfaction, is in perpetual unrest, perpetually consumed by the 'trieb' which he resists, a prey to confused feelings and conceits which throng upon him and rapidly succeed each other; of unbound imagination, his mind is too full, too embarrassed to find expression, to sift, arrange, and lay clear its conceptions; too restless to follow and develop a particular object till it is properly brought out and perfected. . . . The Frank has colonized France, the Saxon England, and so the two different principles are repeated in the two different nations. It is true that in England the Saxon

heaviness has been partly relieved by the imagination of the Normans; but the groundwork of the nation remains Saxon, and its most valuable qualities, individuality, independence, force of will, tenacity of purpose, sense of truth and right, character, are Saxon inheritance. In insular England the individual principle of the Saxon may be said to have found its full, its excessive development. It mastered the king, the Church, as all the powers hostile to the free movement of the individual, and English history is the continual realization of this principle."¹

And the resulting differences of religious theory will not merely be differences of style and expression, but differences of tone and doctrine. The religious experience in divergent national temperaments will issue in divergent, and sometimes contrary, convictions as to the relation between grace and free-will, authority and liberty, faith and works; in contradictory views of the amount of goodness in fallen nature, of the fate of the heathen, of the comparative sinfulness of different sins, of the number and meaning of the Sacraments, of the catholicity of the Church and the seat of its jurisdiction; and hence, as we know, come wars and fightings, excommunications, anathemas, inquisitions. But at the same time, if these philosophies and doctrines are the issue and embodiment of an intense spiritual experience, we may be sure that each has its own measure of truth, though put in an aggravating and aggressive manner. The utterance in each case is ultimately the utterance of the Spirit of God, who has striven

¹ *Richard Rolle of Hampole*, i. p. v.

with the human spirit and set it aflame with spiritual life ; but who has, in His divine condescension, so far connected Himself with His human organ that the utterance has become a mixed utterance, in which the man's idiosyncrasies and weaknesses, together with those of his race and time, have mingled their importunate note with the voice of God, and caused that voice to sound strange and harsh and discordant to the ears of others. Such divergency, and even contradiction, springs from the over-emphasizing of special lines of truth, and implies no disloyalty to the essential root-facts ; rather, it shows that those root-facts are alive and at work in the hearts of men, and growing and bearing fruit, good according to its kind. After all, Christ is the source alike of authority and liberty, being alike Lord of the Church and the Light of the individual soul ; as Creator, He endued men with will ; as Redeemer, He supplemented that gift with the gift of grace ; He works through the Sacraments, and is not limited by the Sacraments in His working ; He is immanent, through the Spirit, in the world, and transcends the world through His union with the Father ; He lived a human life under the conditions of time and space : as the Eternal Word, He is independent of all such bonds and manacles ; He is the fullness of all truth, and of that fullness have all men and nations received according to the measure of their capacity and in the moulds of their idiosyncrasies and temperaments.

We have thus considered, under a variety of aspects, the influence which religious experience exercises upon faith. We have recognized this influence in the

special emphasis laid upon special features of revelation, and the profound spiritual significance found in them ; in the modifications which conventional tradition as to God's action undergoes in the light of spiritual intuition ; in the enrichment which men's grasp of divine truth receives when it is conceived under more spiritual forms as well as under those of space and time ; in the peculiar colour given to a common faith by the tendencies and prejudices of temperament and nationality. And there is no doubt that the influence exerted by experience on faith is as deep as it is varied. The faith which emerges from experience is a very different thing from the faith which first entered into it. Instead of a flat landscape, divided symmetrically into a number of plots, all of the same size and each embodying a doctrine of the Creed, we gaze on a very different scene. A great convulsion has come : hills and valleys have taken the place of the uniform level ; one plot of ground is bare and unfruitful ; another is luxuriant with fruit and flowers ; and in some quarters the dividing lines have disappeared and the whole ground has passed under the ownership of a single victorious and dominant truth.

CHAPTER XI

FAITH AND MORALITY

THERE has always been a tendency to reduce religion to morality; to regard morality as the real thing; to think of religion as a cumbersome and wasteful attempt to express what is much better and more simply expressed as a moral code. The Church, according to these views, had much better resolve itself into an Ethical Society, if it wants to perform any useful work in the coming age. Popular expression is given to this point of view in such statements as, "It doesn't matter what a man believes as long as he lives a good life"; or, "Any faith is (in a sense) true, if it issues in a moral life." The former aphorism aims at a summary divorce of morality from religion; the latter retains religion, in a sense, but finds its whole evidence and value in the morality which flows from it. The former has no use for religion; the latter only has a use for it if, and in so far as, it promotes morality.

Now, the first criticism which it occurs to one to make in connexion with this view is, that there is no such thing as "goodness" or "morality" in the abstract. When we describe a course of conduct

as "good," we mean that it is the sort of conduct which is demanded by that which we have accepted as the chief end of life. In other words, "good" is a relative term, containing a reference to what is "best," *i.e.*, to that which we accept and believe in as the chief good for man. But, if this is so, it follows at once that morality is not independent of our beliefs and convictions.

It is our faith, our whole body of beliefs and ideals and convictions, which determines whether a given course of action is good or not. Thus, if our *summum bonum* is pleasure pure and simple, the "good" life will be a life of pleasure-seeking and enjoyment. Hedonists attempt sometimes to evade the force of this conclusion by trying to smuggle in the pleasure of others alongside of that of the agent ; but this is an unworthy quibble ; since, if altruistic motives are seriously allowed, pleasure ceases to be the good, and the theory has belied itself.

If, again, the *summum bonum* is expressed, in a more general and cautious sense, as consisting in the all-round prosperity and well-being of the agent, then the good life will be a life of prudent and enlightened self-love, allowing and even approving certain forms of self-denial, as being consonant with the adage that honesty is the best policy, and as calculated to produce more happiness in the long run to the person who practises such abstinence. But any conduct which did not tend directly or indirectly to the agent's own happiness would be "bad" conduct, because inconsistent with the goal of life ; the charitably disposed could only excuse action of the sort as due to madness or suicidal

tendency. In each of these cases the good life is the life demanded by that which men believe in as their *summum bonum* ; apart from its relation to that goal, action is not moral action at all, but mere *happening*.

So in the case of Christianity. Christian morality flows from the Christian faith, and has no goodness, or even significance, except in relation to the Christian faith. One element in that faith is a conviction of citizenship in God's kingdom, a community of spiritual life with fellow-citizens of that kingdom, and an obligation to love and serve them. Hence a life of self-devotion to the good of others, without any thought of personal advantage, is a good life from the Christian standpoint, although it would be either a bad life or a mad one from the egotistic platform. Thus, in the case of the Christian life, as in every other case, the goodness of the life involves a necessary reference to that which is accepted as the chief good.

Virtue, goodness, morality are not certain ready-made, immutable ideas which everyone accepts in an identical sense ; they are rather certificates which satisfy us that a course of conduct is in logical congruity with whatever is accepted as the supreme object of existence. From the strictly naturalistic standpoint it would be difficult to defend, and impossible to praise, the Christian "virtue" of chastity ; whilst, again, the "good" life of an egotist aiming at happiness on the whole is, with all its respectability, a thinly-veiled hypocrisy in Christian eyes.

But we have said enough to illustrate the extraordinary shallowness of the contention that a man's

faith does not matter so long as his life is *good*. The good life is only good if it can be regarded as an outcome of the man's faith in his goal; and therefore it is a faith which determines goodness. And, further, if one goal is higher or better than another, then the life which aims at the higher will be a "better" life than that which aims at the lower; and here again faith appears as the determining factor.

But it is worth adding that when people talk in general of a good life, they generally do us the compliment of meaning a *Christian* life, a life comprising such definitely Christian virtues as chastity and truthfulness. And in that case the fallacy of their case becomes even more patent; since the meaning now is, that it doesn't matter what a man's faith is, so long as he leads a Christian life. The Christian life can only issue from the Christian faith. The morality of a Christian is Christian morality, not that unreal abstraction, morality as such; and Christian morality is the conduct of a citizen in Christ's kingdom, inspired by the motives and sanctions of that kingdom. The Christian's life is simply his creed in action; it consists (in S. John's phrase) in *doing the truth*, as the truth is revealed in Jesus Christ.

If, then, by a good life we mean a Christian life, the question of a man's faith is of the most crucial importance to his life. The life flows from the faith and is the imperfect, stammering expression of the faith which inspires it; in fact, there might be some sense in saying that the feeble utterance of a man's actions is unimportant in comparison with the great

convictions which he is struggling to express. At any rate, the life gains its whole significance and value from the faith which underlies it and is the root from which it springs. It may be perfectly true that, if a man abandons the Christian faith, he may appear for a time to be leading much the same sort of life as before ; the momentum imparted by faith continues to make itself felt when the force has been turned off. But if a new generation grows up which has never been taught the Christian faith, it would be as vain to expect the Christian life in them as to expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

And now we may turn to the other statement : A faith is justified, or in some sense true, when it issues in such a life as that of a consistent Christian. The main contention is the same, namely, that what matters is "morality"; and that faith, where it is not dismissed as unnecessary, may be patronized as having somehow produced or occasioned something much better than could have been anticipated from such a source ; something, in fact, so good that we are ready to recognize a certain relative or representative truth in the theory from which it appears to have issued ; and that in any case the Christian religion will always be an interesting object of sympathetic study for contributions which it has, consciously or unconsciously, made to modern civilization.

And the answer is much the same. Christian morality (not modern civilization, which is as like it as chalk to cheese, but Christian morality) is not an accidental or unconscious outcome of Christian faith,

but the essential expression of it, as the fruit is of the tree. People do not train and discipline themselves with a somewhat rigid course of self-denial merely for the fun of the thing, or in some irresponsible moment of semi-consciousness ; they do it because it is inexorably demanded of them by their creed, and especially by the conception of personality which is taught them by their creed. So we cannot found our creed, together with its relative and representative truth, upon our morality, just because our morality necessarily and essentially depends upon our creed. The creed must already be held, and firmly and strongly held, if Christian morality is to result.

It may be answered, that historically this is perfectly true ; that in the past Christian morality did issue from a strong and enthusiastic belief in the Christian Creed ; but that in modern times the natural course is to accord an unqualified acceptance to the morality and a qualified validity to the Creed. In past times the morality flowed straight from the Creed ; at present the Creed is a reflection or afterglow of the morality. But the question is whether, if Christian morality is put first, and regarded as shedding a derivative radiance on the Creed, it can continue to exist at all. The Christian morality which we know, is a strenuous life requiring strong sanctions and clear ideals ; but whence will it get these sanctions and these ideals, if it is a primary and independent thing, not derived in any way from the faith ? Christian morality exhibits itself in two aspects. First, it appears as a curb to the self-regarding passions and instincts. On other systems

the passions may not be thought to need curbing ; but Christianity insists that they do ; and where is the curb to be found, if faith is an offshoot of morality and not the root from which it springs ? Secondly, the Christian life may be regarded as the larger whole in which the individual finds his true self, when those rebellious passions have been subdued ; and where is the portraiture, and the constraining power, of the larger and truer life to come from, when faith is allowed to originate nothing ? All morality must (as we have shown) rest on some form of faith ; the most strenuous morality, that of the Christian, requires the strongest faith as its support. If it ceases to rest on the Christian Creed, it will either have no support at all or must seek support elsewhere ; in the former case it will cease to be morality, and in the latter it will cease to be Christian.

The fact is that, in making belief depend on practice, the modernist and the pragmatist are trying to stand the pyramid on its apex, and the inevitable collapse ensues.

It is true, as we shall see in the next chapter, that the morality of a Christian helps him considerably in his faith, but this is in the way of ratification and confirmation. The faith must exist first, to inspire and justify the restrictions and ideals of the morality ; the morality could never have come into being, or maintained itself in the teeth of temptation, without a strong foundation of belief ; and the service which it subsequently does to belief is a service of verification through experience.

CHAPTER XII

MORALITY AND FAITH

“ **I** F any man will do His will,” said our Lord, “he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”¹ And the words declare that in morality, or the practical life of obedience, we shall find a verification of the faith by which it is inspired. We may look at this truth first in its most general significance. When the course of action demanded by a creed is found to be satisfying to the man who practises it, the natural result is that his confidence in his creed is strengthened. For instance, if the egotist finds that his enlightened and highly respectable career of self-love warms him with a glow of satisfaction and self-approval, he naturally takes this fact as an added testimony to his belief. On the other hand, if the attempt to carry a creed into action results in sheer confusion and disappointment and failure, that fact must militate strongly against the validity of the chief good itself. Thus “particular hedonism” states as the chief good the impartial gratification of every desire as it occurs. On this theory the “good” man will be the man who sets

¹ St. John vii. 17.

himself conscientiously to work to follow the lead of each and every impulse of his nature ; but the chaos which results from ignoring the element of unity and permanence which characterizes that nature forms a strong protest against particular pleasure being regarded as the end of life.

The gratification which either the egotist or the Christian feels as the result of his experiments in life shows at any rate that the hypothesis from which the experiments flow is a workable hypothesis, one that is capable of satisfying at least a certain element of his nature.

And further, if the Christian's morality seems to be the satisfaction of his highest nature, the Christian faith must be further enhanced in value and validity by such a verification of it in experience. But we must repeat that the morality in question is Christian morality ; not utilitarian or naturalistic morality, but a morality essentially bound up with, and derived from, the Christian faith.

Christian morality, thus understood, is simply one aspect of the Christian life or experience. It expresses Christianity on its volitional side, just as faith expresses it on its intellectual side, and temperament or sentiment expresses it on its emotional side. Any one of these elements may be said to verify, and be verified by the others, in the sense that together they form a threefold cord of testimony, in which each strand is strengthened by being intertwined with the others. Thus if Christian morality is unduly emphasized, to the exclusion of the other factors in the Christian life, it tends to become hard and censorious ; it will do its

work doggedly as a matter of sheer distasteful duty ; it will insist pedantically on the work being done in this and not in any other way ; and will be eager to criticize and condemn any freshness or freedom or originality of service. If the Christian morality is not to sink to pure moralism, it must be warmed by feeling, which will make our neighbour an object of our love and not a case for our sour supervision ; and it must be enlightened of faith, which will suggest that there are many ways in which work may be done in God's kingdom in a spirit of friendly co-operation between the workers. In this sense Christian morality gains enormously by its association with Christian faith and Christian sentiment ; in fact, as we pointed out before, it only continues to be Christian morality at all when it is thus imbedded in the rich context of the Christian life. And on the other hand it renders conspicuous service to its yoke-fellows in that life. If Christian sentiment is vague unless enlightened by Christian faith, it is also dreamy and ineffectual until it is set in action by the will and worked out in "loveliness of perfect deeds" ; and faith, again, will be merely "intellectualist," will merely consist in theory and controversy, until it is not only clothed in feeling but enlisted in the works of moral activity.

Thus the verification of faith by morality is merely one case of the way in which the will and the feelings and the intellect involve each other, and thereby support and ratify each other, in that Christian life in which all three are necessary ingredients. But, isolating this particular case, we may specify one or

two ways in which the faith of a Christian is thus strengthened by his morality.

1. In the first place, the Christian faith is not (as we have seen already) a complete theory of the universe, but a doctrine of God revealed in the teaching and example of Christ. And self-sacrifice is the most obvious characteristic of Christ's human life. Thus the Christian faith becomes in a very real sense a doctrine of the cross, a statement of the way of salvation opened for men by the cross and by their participations in the sufferings of the Crucified. And such a doctrine naturally wins more acceptance the more the participation in Christ's sufferings is actually accomplished in the morality of the Christian life. The more a man for the love of Christ denies himself and acts for the good of others, the more real and acceptable does the doctrine of the cross become to him. Apart from Christian action, the doctrine will be a gross and abhorrent conception: "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean, and the world has grown grey with Thy breath." But in the light of Christian action, and the satisfaction which follows it, it becomes a splendid and exhilarating truth. It is a doctrine which essentially demands moral action and is essentially validated by it. Other doctrines are more or less independent of action, such as those which find the chief good in culture or in stoical indifference; some again shrink from action, or from a test which they cannot face, such as the form of hedonism alluded to above.

But the Christian ideal, in virtue of its very constitution, cries out for action, as that in which it can

be understood and realized and verified. When sacrifice, self-denial, mortification, vicarious suffering, are actually experienced in the Christian life, they not only cease to be hideous and repellant, but they throw back a wave of welcome and recognition and acceptance upon that doctrine which presented them once for all as characteristics of the perfect life. Here then is one service which Christian morality renders to the Christian faith ; it makes the central doctrine of faith a *natural*, and therefore a real and acceptable doctrine—a doctrine which ratifies the deepest instincts of human nature at the same time that it strengthens and enlightens them.

2. Secondly, the will which works in Christian morality is the source of *habit*. Christian action renders the faith, not an occasional object of contemplation, but a fixed habit of life. Moral virtues, as Aristotle remarked, cannot be forgotten, because they are always being exercised ; and so, when the Christian faith is habitually expressed in action, it is itself strongly and permanently present to the consciousness of those who hold it and express it. Through being thus continually exercised in moral action, faith becomes the most intimate and characteristic note of the man's whole being ; just as, in the converse case, when a man's life is growing away from his faith, the faith itself becomes attenuated and conventional, until only some small and casual shock is required to destroy it altogether. The good works, then, of Christian morality do a service to faith in causing it to be habitually present to the mind as the source from which the works proceed.

3. Faith looks away from this world to a tran-

scendent order of existence. Hence expectancy rather than attainment is its characteristic mark. But it is hard to live on expectancy ; some measure of attainment is necessary, if only in order to rise upon it to a higher level of expectancy. And it is in Christian action that this attainment is found. Christ Himself in the fullness of His nature is the object of Christian faith ; and the finding of Christ in His fullness must necessarily be deferred till heaven. But the Christian who in his moral life bears about with him the dying of Christ, and crucifies his selfish nature on the cross of Christ, has at once a union with Christ in His death ; and this union is not merely the pledge, but rather the beginning, the first stage, of a union with Christ in His glory. So that which to faith alone is an expectancy becomes, through the moral life, a substantial reality and achievement. Faith expressed in action ceases to be merely a hope or expectancy, but becomes "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."¹

4. And Christian action, which, as we have seen, makes faith more natural and habitual and substantial, also helps it to become a *progressive* thing. God's revelation of Himself is gradual ; each action on His part demands a response from the will of the man to whom the revelation is made ; and this response is the condition of there being any fresh message from the side of God. God does not begin by making a revelation which is hard, clear-cut, and precise ; rather He begins by hints, whispers, suggestions, which may be either ignored or accepted by the will of the man.

¹ Heb. xi. 1.

Christ revealed Himself to S. Paul in a flash of light ; but the declaration of "the things which were appointed for him to do " was made later, when the man's will had abased itself before the glory of the primary revelation. So, again, the call of Isaiah was not at the beginning a call at all. God began by revealing a picture of His divine majesty, and then there was a pause. What will the prophet do ? He makes his response in the self-humiliation of his will : "Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." This response enables God to proceed further in the revelation of Himself. The absolution of the man follows, and at last a definite message comes to his purified heart and humbled will : "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? Then said I, Here am I ; send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people."

Thus the will, in humbling itself before the initial unfolding of the divine glory, does a very valuable work for faith ; it turns a vague uneasy sense of the supernatural into an assured and progressive relationship with God. Many vocations seem to be lost through the failure of men's wills to seize the incipient message and translate it into practice ; whilst those who do thus act upon it, and make the right response of absolute self-abasement, find that it has become a rung in the ladder of a higher ascent to God and the knowledge of God's will.

Christian morality, then, first flows from the Christian faith, and then confirms and ratifies it ; natura-

lizing it in the life, and habituating it to the mind, of the believer, and further imparting to it a measure of achievement and a power of progressive development.

In all these ways the morality of a Christian is his spiritual life viewed from the side of *experience* ; and the influence of Christian action on Christian belief is just a case of the influence of experience on faith.

In Chapter X, where we dealt with this subject, we were considering experience from the standpoint of temperament rather than of moral action, looking at it from the side of the feelings rather than from the side of the will.

We now see that what is true of the one is true of the other ; that the experience which is dictated by the will and embodied in action has its own contributions to make in rendering faith more vital and real and personal.

CHAPTER XIII

CONSENSUS FIDELIUM

WE have next to consider the influence exerted upon religious knowledge by the *consensus fidelium*, or common tradition on matters of belief. And we take the *consensus* in its widest and most multiform significance. We include under it those convictions which from time to time have been accepted and ratified by authoritative decisions ; those which are sanctioned as pious opinions ; those which are affirmed by the priest and people of the church where a man worships ; those which dominate his family circle and were impressed upon him in his childhood. In all the cases alike a man's religious opinions are influenced by the opinions of other people ; and the question is, how far this influence is a valuable and instructive one. And it is necessary at the outset to clear our mind on one important point. If current tradition becomes infallible truth by receiving an official imprimatur, then it might be argued that such tradition is not only instructive for the individual but practically dispenses him from the need of any other instruction, as far as the intellectual side of religious knowledge is concerned. It will

only be necessary for him to ponder it, meditate upon it, and make it the beacon light of his experience, in order to arrive at a perfect and satisfying body of religious knowledge. But, in the first place, we have already seen the insuperable difficulties which beset such an attempt to invest tradition with the authority of revelation. Tradition must be tested by revelation, and where it goes beyond revelation it must be regarded as religious philosophy with a relative and temporary validity. And, secondly, even if we admit that tradition, thus ratified by authority, contains nothing but truth, we should still have to ask whether it contains the highest and most important truths. Can the consent of the faithful be trusted not only to exclude error, but also to discriminate between truths and to emphasize those most necessary to salvation ?

To answer in the affirmative is to ignore the influences which affect the collective opinions and beliefs of masses of men in religious as well as other matters.

Having thus cleared the ground, we may state the problems of consent in the form of three questions. (1) Does consent increase the evidence for facts, *i.e.*, make them more certain ? (2) Does it lay stress upon the most important facts ? (3) Does the acceptance of consent, as an authoritative ground of belief, make for real religious knowledge, *i.e.*, give rise to vital convictions and personal experience in religion ?

1. Under the first head, it is obvious that consent only increases the evidence for facts when each of

the consenting parties can be assumed to have exercised an independent judgment, or to have occupied an independent position, on the matter in question. For instance, if the beliefs of a number of local churches, scattered throughout the world and living under very different conditions, are compared and found to be practically identical, this fact is strong evidence that we have here the primitive nucleus of Christian doctrine. Each works from an independent position, and all arrive at an identical conclusion. But in the vast majority of beliefs held in common such independence cannot be assumed, and therefore the consent does not augment the evidence for their truth. We all believe that the earth goes round the sun; but the consensus of belief does not make this fact more certain, unless we can assume that each believer has examined and verified for himself the grounds of his belief; which is obviously not the case. The evidence for such facts rests not at all on the consent of the many, but on the investigation of the few.

And so it is also in religious matters. The belief of the many as to the authority and date of the books of the Bible does not represent independent research on their part. The research is done by a handful of experts, and their conclusions are popularized by the parish priest and assimilated by his congregation with very little examination on the part of either. The conclusions may be perfectly true, but their truth does not depend on the numbers who accept them. But we can go even further. Not only is the verdict of the expert infinitely more important as evidence than the consent of the multitude, but the expert's verdict

is apt to be corrupted and falsified if he is a member of a multitude. A man may, by training and experience, be thoroughly competent to give an accurate account of events which he observes, and will do so if he is a solitary witness of their occurrence. But make him one of a multitude of witnesses and he is robbed at once of his perspicacity and accuracy. Some superficial and misleading detail of the event engrosses the attention of the crowd, and by their contagious influence the expert's judgment is perverted and his voice merely echoes the impressions of the rest. Instances of this occur every day in connection with spiritualistic séances. Eminent men of science, perfect dragons of enlightenment and observation, are in some mysterious way hypnotized by their surroundings and the companionship of believers, and the reports which they issue are no better than those of a bishop or a blacksmith. So far, then, we conclude that the consensus of a multitude of believers does not, as a rule, enhance the evidence for the belief, and that promptness and unanimity are actually its most damaging characteristics, since they are the most hostile to thought and reflection.

Of course, in religion as in other spheres we start by taking things on trust; but we recognize to some extent the need of knowing whom we trust, and at any rate we do not really believe that we validate our beliefs by counting the heads of those who hold them.

Arianism was the faith of the multitude, but it was better to be with Athanasius than with the world.

2. If the consent of the multitude is to be in any

real sense the basis of our religion, we must trust the multitude to seize on the highest and most important of religious truths. Granted that they have not the intellectual training to weigh evidence, may they not be credited with a spiritual insight, a sanctified common sense, which will enable them to understand and value the things that really matter in religion? We may argue that it is so, and may urge in their favour the power which the simple and sublime truths of the Gospel exercise on their lives. But this fact must be put to the credit of the Gospel rather than of the multitude; the question is whether those simple and sublime truths are apt to be maintained in their simplicity and sublimity, or whether the mind of the multitude tends to distort and deprave them. Are spiritual insight and sanctified common sense really an endowment of the multitude of believers? Are they not rather to be described as a painful achievement of the saints; and is it not just the work of the saints to attempt to bring the erring imagination of the multitude back to an appreciation of the simple and the sublime, from which it is always wandering? The collective mind of a multitude is, as M. le Bon points out, a definite thing, distinct from the aggregate of individual minds. The individual minds are not compounded, mechanically, so as to produce a joint effect which is simply the sum total of the effects of the separate forces; they combine, chemically, to produce a result unlike that which is produced by any of the separate agents. That is, a multitude acts and thinks in a manner of its own, quite different from the manner in which its individual members act and think in their individual capacity.

"Among the most savage members of the French Convention were to be found inoffensive citizens who, under ordinary circumstances, would have been peaceable notaries or virtuous magistrates. The storm past, they resumed their normal character of quiet, law-abiding citizens."¹

The contagion of excitement, and the hypnotism which people under such conditions exercise on each other, explain the difference of action.

And, in religion as elsewhere, the feelings and ideas which move a multitude must be clear and strong and elemental, and such as appeal to their inherited racial instincts.

They must be highly-coloured, so as to strike the imagination; simple and uncompromising, to make an intelligible claim on the will; impassioned and sentimental, so as to stir the strongest and most deeply rooted instincts of the heart.

The material flames of purgatory, the infallibility of pope or pastor, the comprehensive wickedness and eternal perdition of the heterodox, the unconditioned efficacy of the sacraments on the one hand or of faith on the other—such are the conceptions which have weight with the multitude and form the content of its collective mind.

There must be no "hedging," no "via media," no proportion or perspective, no balancing of complementary truths; nothing but one isolated idea, developed to its utmost consequences by the imperious logic of passion.

Again, the underlying instincts of race and age have a moulding influence on the collective faith; the

¹ Le Bon, *The Crowd*, English translation, p. 28.

Jewish belief in a political Messiahship had a degrading influence through many ages on the multitude's conception of the Church; the belief in national demi-gods held by the German invaders of the Empire gave vogue and currency to the Arian doctrine of Christ's nature.

So, too, the collective mind tends to stereotype its conceptions, and makes them to do duty again and again, instead of altering them to suit different circumstances. This is especially striking in the case of the saints. The popular mind forms once for all its picture of what it means by a saint, and applies it with a noble consistency to all the canonized heroes of the Church. No local saint must be allowed to lack any of the qualities which go to form the accepted notion of saintliness; the loyalty of his devotees may be trusted to rectify any such omission; his virtues, abilities, and sufferings are at once brought up to the preconceived standard of the multitude.

Father Delehaye¹ illustrates the wearisome monotony which, in consequence of this, marks the stories of the martyrs. There is the same trial before a pagan magistrate, the same dialogue between judge and prisoner, the same miracles, the same tortures and barbarities, the same conversion of bystanders, and so forth. It is obvious how much we lose by this procedure, not only in historical truth, but also in the edification which we should otherwise have gained through contemplating Christian saintliness under a great variety of dispositions and circumstances. As it is, we find ourselves gazing at an identical portrait, which is crude, conventional, and unreal. The few

¹ *The Legends of the Saints*, English translation (Longmans).

"acts of the martyrs" which are really simple and sublime are those which have providentially escaped the fate of being edited and amplified by the mind of the multitude. These various considerations are sufficient to show that the popular mind cannot be trusted to discriminate wisely between religious conceptions, and to choose the highest and most spiritual. They show also that the guidance of the Holy Spirit must not be brought forward to palliate or excuse the vulgarities and extravagances in which the popular consensus is exhibited. He guides Christians into truth; but the mode in which they envisage it will be in accordance with their general tastes and fancies; and the tastes and fancies of the multitude are worse, not better, than those of the individual.

3. And, in the third place, if a man accepts the consent of the faithful as a basis for his belief, is his religious knowledge thereby made more real? We have seen that the reality of religious knowledge consists in the interaction of faith and experience. Real religious knowledge may be described indifferently as rational experience or as vital conviction. Does, then, a reliance on consent make for reality in this sense? This question is independent of the two others which we have just answered. For the sake of argument we may admit that consent augments the evidence for facts, and, again, that it expresses facts on their most spiritual side (though we have seen that it really does just the opposite); and we proceed to ask whether, even on those admissions, it has a favourable influence on the character or quality of a man's beliefs. This last question need not occupy

us for long. It is obvious that if a man takes his religious beliefs ready-made, if the classifying and standardizing and evaluation of them is done for him by someone else, there will always be something alien and adventitious about them ; they will not be personal or real ; they will not be his own property at all.

The facts of the Creed come to be accepted by him on account of their constant iteration, but their credentials are not tested, nor are they verified by inward experiences. And, again, the instincts and sentiments which are the undeveloped stuff of experience are stimulated and excited by popular contagion without being illuminated by personal faith. Raw feeling is annexed to undigested dogma, and neither of them helps or confirms the other, because they have not been fused together in the spiritual life of the man himself, but have been tied together for him by the consensus of his fellow-churchmen. Such a man will be able to shout "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" for the space of two hours in the middle of an excited mob, but his religion will not be a real live thing at all.

It is tolerably clear, then, that consent can neither produce nor ratify religious knowledge. But it does not follow that it is of no use for religious knowledge. There are two ways in which it has a value of its own. In the first place, in religion as in other things we start by taking facts on trust, in order afterwards to verify and reaffirm them on our own account. The institutional side of religion is of great importance. As members of the institution we learn our lessons, are drilled and schooled in habits of discipline and reverence, and impressed with a character which will

steady us as we pass to the other stages which are described as rational and experimental. We learn our earliest lessons from the lips of authority (which is consent speaking *ex cathedra*); we relearn them as truths accepted by the intellect; and we learn them once again as vital experiences in which our whole nature finds its utterance. Our progress in religion consists, as S. John well knew, in continually re-learning what we know already, until at last we have its witness in ourselves and "need not that any man teach us."¹

The earliest stage of discipleship has to be transcended if real personal knowledge is to be attained; but it is a necessary stage, and the reverence which it aims at inculcating is not only a precious and enduring heritage, but a valuable instrument for avoiding error in the intellectual phase that follows. And secondly, when a man's real, personal religious knowledge has been formed, or is in process of formation, the fellowship of the faithful is a real help and encouragement. He lives in an atmosphere of religious faith and practice, and his own religion is supported by the religion of other people. He gains confidence by seeing that his own convictions are shared, though not perhaps arrived at in the same way, by other people; his communion with them

¹ "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it" (1 S. John ii. 21). "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (*ibid.*, v. 13). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (*ibid.*, v. 10); "the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (*ibid.*, ii. 27).

gives him boldness and enthusiasm to put those convictions in practice.

Thus, whilst the *consensus fidelium* cannot, in the nature of the case, give a man religious knowledge properly so-called, it can and does teach him the alphabet of that knowledge; and it can and does strengthen him in the practice and profession of it when it has been acquired.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VALUE OF CRITICISM

THE reason why the acceptance of popular consent cannot be regarded as religious knowledge lies, as has been seen, in the fact that popular consent is an external thing. It is taken over ready-made, whereas religious knowledge must to a very real extent be a home-made article.

And the fact that consent is taken over ready-made explains how it is that the commodity, once produced, is handed on with very little change from generation to generation. It is transmitted as an heirloom from father to son; as an heirloom it is prized and cherished; but, because an heirloom, it is jealously guarded from the hand of the restorer, from being modified or retouched by the thought and feeling of those who have inherited it. But if it is to become a body of vital conviction, it must be modified by the quickening touch of thought and feeling. And there is no reason why it should not. In itself, it is just a popular philosophy of religion, representing revelation as modified by the crude imagination of the multitude; and we have seen that all religious philosophy is relative and contingent.

Consent, being itself a modification of revelation, is liable to be modified and recast. In Chapter X we have seen how this is done from the side of feeling. Religious experience transforms the inherited opinion, for instance, on the subject of the punishment of sin ; S. Catherine's doctrine of purgatory was a notable instance of the operation. We need say no more on that point ; but we must add that criticism effects a similar modification from the side of the intellect.

And when feeling and thought have both done their work, consent is transformed into religious knowledge ; a religious knowledge which may be described as vital experience, if the work of feeling is principally emphasized, or as vital faith, if special stress be laid on the work of the intellect upon it. And the work of the intellect on the consent of the faithful may be comprehensively described as criticism.

Criticism is not a thing to be dreaded and deprecated ; it should rather be welcomed and used as an important means of developing religious knowledge on the side of faith, even as feeling develops it on the side of experience.

1. One obvious result of criticism is that, under its touch, irrelevant details fall away. These have been of no service to our communion with God ; they have rather obscured the true issues of religion. Their retention alongside of important matters has impaired the singleness of our vision of the truth. A greater directness of knowledge is gained by their abandonment. For instance, the Copernican system has done good service in emancipating us from spacial ideas in matters of religion. It throws us

back upon ourselves and makes it easier for us to grasp the truth of the spiritual omnipresence of God. It helps us to see that the absence of God from us means just our own withdrawal from Him through sin and wilfulness. It leads us to give full force to the truth of the immanence of God in the religious consciousness.

And, conversely, criticism from the side of evolution is teaching us a complementary truth, namely, that He who is thus "about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways," is also working towards a distant end, in which working He claims our own co-operation. A true conception of evolution brings the truth of God's transcendence before our mind, saving us from morbid introspection, and reminding us of the great world-process in which we are to bear our part. Or, again, the Gospel criticism which lays stress on our Lord's human consciousness, and His employment of the current conceptions of His time, not only brings Him very near to us but also encourages us in the belief that, under our own contemporary categories and symbols, a real and adequate knowledge of God is possible, if we hold fast to the substance of His revelation; that, though we see "through a glass darkly," it is none the less God whom we see.

2. Criticism rouses us from lethargy, and urges us to make a new synthesis for ourselves, harmonizing the Gospel with the new knowledge which it forces upon our notice.

Of course, this stimulating work of criticism itself requires criticizing. It is a mistake to strain after

being smart and up-to-date, always ready to hear and tell some new thing, always eager to make old-fashioned people's flesh creep with the news of the latest denials from Germany. The antidote is to be found partly in that spirit of reverence which we have alluded to as a precious legacy from institutionalism, and partly in that steady persistence in religious life and observance which is shortly to be considered. We shall learn in these ways that our religion can be made real and rational and personal without becoming vague and timid and uncertain. Our capacity for apprehending religious truth is manifold and complex, as we have tried to show; the congruity between our deep-rooted instincts and the revelation of Christ is a fact of experience as well as of faith; each new synthesis, as it is made, renders the congruity more true and satisfying.

" That face fades not, rather grows ;
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and knows."

Thus we may be sure that a readiness to criticize our categories, overhaul our philosophy, and take stock of our assumptions is a healthy and stimulating discipline, one which does much to save us from that formalism and self-satisfaction which are so sore an impediment to a living, personal faith.

3. And this brings us to our last point.

Criticism is calculated to cure us of conceit and self-deception, as it lays bare our many mistakes and exposes the hollowness and conventionality of our cherished prepossessions. We English Church

people need this treatment badly. We have been terribly apt to pat ourselves on the back (metaphorically, at any rate, such an operation is both possible and habitual) on the score of our national religion—on the sobriety which it breathes ; on the learning which it has digested ; on the comprehensiveness with which it embraces contradictory propositions without so much as turning a hair ; on its glorious isolation from the rest of Catholic Christendom ; on its attitude of respectful deference to the State ; on its happy freedom from any taint of poetry, mysticism, or imagination ; in a word, on the stolidity and stodginess which we have regarded as its peculiar glory through three centuries. Surely we have here an unrivalled field for the useful operation of criticism, as it forces us to recognize deeper spiritual depths of experience than we have ever attempted to fathom and a wider area of facts than we have ever attempted to explore.

And, more practically, criticism may be a blessing to us if it takes the form (in England) of Disestablishment, or of some equally disquieting upheaval, which shall drive the Church down to the bed-rock of principles, shall convince her that to know what she means is a good preparation for doing it, and that the Gospel of Christ has a greater inherent capacity of spiritual independence than she has hitherto believed.

CHAPTER XV

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WE have now seen how religious knowledge is developed by the interaction and mutual influence of faith and experience. We have seen how faith shines on those dark instincts and uncertain surmises of the soul which are the germs of experience, and how, like sunflowers to the sun, they turn under its influence to God and are enlightened, and grow into a communion with God, which is the knowledge of God from the side of the heart.

And we have seen how religious experience, thus formed under the guidance of faith, itself reacts upon faith, giving it diversity, passion, and vitality, making it personal and powerful, turning a man's conventional creed into a body of truths by which he lives, recreating faith, in a word, as knowledge based on experience.

For the sake of clearness we have separated these two processes and considered each by itself ; and have also, in the main, spoken of them as our own work, carried out by us as Christians, no doubt, but through the use of our own capacities, intellectual and spiritual.

Now, therefore, we must add a necessary correction; first, by pointing to the fact which has been mentioned before, that the two forms of knowledge, religious experience and vital belief, are united in the unity of the spiritual life, being indeed but two complementary aspects, the emotional and the intellectual, of the spiritual life itself; and secondly by insisting that this spiritual life is pre-eminently the work of the Holy Spirit, with whom we are to co-operate, but without whom we are quite powerless and ineffective. The Spirit, who is leading the Church, in spite of much human waywardness and resistance, into all truth, is doing a similar work in the individual soul. Spiritual life, viewed from the side of experience, is ultimately our love of God; not a laboured conviction that He deserves our love and that we ought to love Him, but simply the act of loving, the feeling of a love for Him pervading our hearts and driving away fearfulness and doubts. And it is the Spirit who gives us this: "Hope maketh not ashamed," says S. Paul, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." ¹

Spiritual life, again, in its more intellectual aspect, is the making real to ourselves the position in which we stand to God, the consciously entering into an inheritance that is ours, the seizing upon a fact and making it a living truth. And this, again, is the work of the Spirit. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made

¹ Rom. v. 5. I am much indebted to Professor Swete's admirable arrangement of S. Paul's teaching in *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*.

under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that ye might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”¹ Faith in the work of Christ for mankind is transmuted by the Spirit into knowledge of the effects of that work in ourselves, and the expression of our own experience of it.

Further, this vital knowledge of sonship to God will express itself, as the passage suggests, in prayer. And where the underlying experience is very deep and intense, the prayer will have its own special characteristics. It will not consist in set, formal, definite petitions, nor indeed, as a rule, in petitions for any specially defined object at all. Rather it will utter itself in inarticulate aspirations, the aspirations of a soul that yearns for its Father and its home, even as a hart for the water-brooks, or a thirsty land for the rain. And here, too, is the action of the Spirit which helpeth our infirmities: “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”² There are no words; words are not needed, since God, who reads the man’s heart, recognizes in it the thought or purpose of the Spirit, and accepts it as the man’s own thought or purpose, and as one which is in accordance with His own will.

Once more, the intellectual counterpart of love is not only the knowledge of our relation to God and the lifting

¹ Gal. iv. 4-6.

² Rom. viii. 26-7.

of the soul to Him in prayer ; it is also the " wisdom " which has a kind of intuitive insight into the things of God. This is something very different from the wisdom of the world which comes to nought, the wisdom by which the wise world knows not God ; indeed, this divine wisdom is something which is necessarily foolishness to the world, because the world has no capacity for receiving it. " As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." ¹ And this is the Spirit which " we have received."

This passage is curiously parallel to the one just quoted from Romans. There, God searches the man's heart, and recognizes and accepts the unuttered intention of the Spirit working therein. Here, the Spirit searches God's heart, and makes God's intention known to the men who receive Him. Prayer is the work of the Spirit accepted by God : wisdom is the mind of God revealed by the Spirit. Prayer is our faith spiritualized into communion with God : wisdom is God's truth communicated to us by His Spirit.

So, again, the Apostle prays that God would give those to whom he writes " a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ; " ² that He would endue them, that is, with a gift of the Holy Spirit consisting in wisdom and revelation. Here the latter word may be taken naturally to suggest the more

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9-10, 12.

² Eph. i. 17.

vivid communications by means of visions and prophetic speaking ; just as, a little later, he says that "by revelation God made known unto him the mystery" ¹ of the reconciliation of the world to God, and of its parts to each other, in Christ.

It is very interesting to observe how the two elements of faith and experience, of insight and communion, of mind and heart, which we have been considering in their working upon each other, are fused and blended in the unity of the spiritual life, as is witnessed by S. Paul when he prays "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." ²

Moreover, the working of the Spirit has a very important incidental result in giving us an experimental insight into Himself and thereby helping us to a vital grasp on the doctrine of God. Our consciousness, throughout our spiritual life, of a divine assistance, of a spiritual presence who speaks of God to us, and speaks for us to God ; who inflames our heart with love, and teaches us to pray and to understand the mysteries of God,—this consciousness is itself a vital knowledge of God the Holy Ghost, a verification through experience of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. That which Christ taught of the Comforter or Advocate, who should be within the

¹ Eph. iii. 3.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 16-19.

disciples, and in whose presence the Father and the Son would be present too, ceases to be a mere external statement accepted by faith; it becomes a truth grounded on experience, attested by all those mysterious, but most real, operations of which we are conscious within us—operations mysterious with all the mystery of God, but real as anything which the eye sees or the ear hears, or rather infinitely more real, inasmuch as the spiritual is more real than the material, being in fact the source of any reality which the material possesses. But faith still has its work in connexion with the doctrine of the Divine Spirit. We experience His operation and His gifts, but in each case there is much more that will be made manifest hereafter. The expressions “seal,” “promise,” “first-fruits,” so often used by S. Paul in speaking of Him, point to a complete consummation of believers when they shall have entered finally into their “inheritance” of eternal life.

Lastly, the whole work of the Holy Spirit in fashioning our experience and beliefs, His work in its various aspects, together with the prospect of a fuller completion of it afterwards, is given in a great passage in the second epistle to the Corinthians, the last that we shall quote. The Apostle has referred to the veil Moses wore on his face, which (according to S. Paul’s interpretation) prevented the children of Israel from seeing the end of that which was being done away; that is, from seeing Christ, who is the end and fulfilment of the Law. And he goes on to declare that a similar veil of obscurity rests on the hearts of the Jews whenever Moses is

read, a veil which will be taken away, when Israel turns to the Lord. And he concludes, "But we all with open (unveiled) face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, as the change is wrought by the Spirit of the Lord."¹

That is, all Christians are able to see in Christ the final fulfilment of the Law; gazing on Him, as such, they catch in their own souls a reflection of His glory; from gazing on His glory without they come to appropriate it within; and the result is that *many* believers are gradually transformed to *one and the same* image of Christ, by a process of change which is effected by the Spirit.

The contemplation of Christ reconciles the Law and the Gospel; unites believers in the unity of their Lord; transforms their nature through its reception of that which they behold; and makes them many mirrors of one glorious face.

And all this is the operation of the Holy Spirit.

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER

NOW, if the Holy Spirit has so much to do in producing religious knowledge, both on the side of faith and of experience, it will follow that care must be taken to allow full scope for His work. A certain attitude or disposition of mind must be cultivated with this object ; and in the main this will be an attitude of quiet receptivity, of attentive waiting for the spiritual knowledge which He communicates. The voice of the Spirit can only be heard, and His influence can only be effective, when the soul is in a state of interior peace and tranquillity. And before this tranquil condition of receptivity can be had, there must be a purification, a cleansing of the soul of whatever interferes with such a condition.

By this means, Father Caussade assures us, peace "will be obtained so thoroughly that it can be disturbed neither by uneasy remorse which springs from impurity of conscience ; nor by violent attachments which come from impurity in a heart made for God alone, and violently fastening itself to creatures ; nor by the tyranny of passions, since their prime origin is in the impurity of a mind given over to wandering

thoughts ; nor, finally, by the desire of pleasing men, or the vain fear of displeasing them, since both these come only from the impure motives of such actions as have not God alone in view."

The action, then, of the Spirit in producing this knowledge of God in us requires a peaceful attitude of receptivity on our part, and this peace results from purity. There must be purity of *conscience*, from which morbid scrupulosity has been expelled ; purity of a *heart* reposing upon the desire for God ; purity of a *mind* from which distractions are banished ; purity of *action* performed for the sake of God alone. We cannot pursue this subject further at present, since we are not occupied here with ascetic discipline, but with the attainment of religious knowledge ; purification can only be just insisted upon as the necessary condition of that interior peace which again is a condition of the work of the teaching Spirit. This receptive attitude does not mean that we are to empty ourselves of any religious knowledge which we already possess ; rather it means that we are to offer what we have to Him, that He may bless and amend and augment it ; we are to offer Him our faith, in the spirit of " Lord, I believe ; help Thou my unbelief " ; and offer also our peculiar endowment of instincts, impulses, and aspirations, which are not to be crushed out of existence, but dedicated and sanctified.

Sometimes the Spirit will work by turning faith into a sort of visual experience, as when Julian of Norwich tells us that she " saw God in a point " of light, or as other mystics say that they have had an intellectual vision of the Holy Trinity. Sometimes He will

make experience the avenue to faith, as in cases where (as Dr. Starbuck points out) a feeling of utter weakness and incompleteness is the crisis which leads to the "conversion" of belief.

Again, receptivity of the Spirit's teaching does not require retirement from occupations in the world; it just means that we must be living on a spiritual level, with hearts and minds open to spiritual truths and influences, avoiding anything that would "quench" or "grieve" the personal Spirit who is their source. And in one word this means prayer, in the widest and truest sense, since prayer is the uplifting of our soul to God, the focusing upon God of our whole nature in the unity of all its capacities and the dedication of all its gifts and powers.

To maintain the temper of prayer is to dwell on the spiritual uplands and be accessible to the quickening breezes of the Spirit; and people can live spiritually on these mountain-tops whilst all the time their heads and feet and brains are busy at work in the valley. The will, as S. Teresa explains, seems to be united with God, and to leave the other faculties free, that they may attend to things relating to His service. And "this is a great favour, on whomsoever our Lord bestows it, for the active and contemplative life are united. Our Lord is there served by all; for the Will is busy at her work, without knowing how she works, and continues in her contemplation. The other two powers serve to do the office of Martha; so that she and Mary walk together."¹ This principle that prayer is essentially the communion of the will with God, and that it can be

¹ *Way of Perfection*, English translation, p. 179.

maintained whilst the other capacities are busy at work, is very important as showing how receptivity to the teaching of the Spirit can be preserved under what seem like most adverse conditions, and how consequently there can be a continuous growth in religious knowledge. S. Teresa is fond of insisting upon this point, with humorous and graphic illustrations. What seem like distractions in prayer may mean, she says, that a double work is being done for God. "We cannot stop the wanderings of the imagination. But we immediately send all the faculties of the soul after it, and consider ourselves quite lost, and that we have misspent the time during which we were in God's presence; and perhaps in the meantime the soul is wholly united with Him in the inmost mansions, while the imagination is roaming round the suburbs of the castle, and is engaged with a thousand wild and poisonous beasts, and thus acquiring merit by this painful conflict."¹ And even when the distractions are real and frivolous no great harm need be done. "When the Soul finds herself in so high a degree of prayer, if the understanding should run after the greatest fooleries in the world, let her laugh at it and leave it as a fool, and remain in her quiet. . . . If she seek by force of arms to bring it to her, she loses the strength which she has against it, and which she obtains by eating and taking that divine nourishment; and neither one nor the other will gain anything, but both will be losers."²

If such teaching seems rather risky, we must remember that it is a great contemplative saint, not a

¹ *Interior Castle*, p. 78.

² *Way of Perfection*, p. 183.

novice in meditation, to whose experience we are listening.

What we ordinary people may learn from it, to our great comfort, is that no stress of work or unavoidable distractions need cut off that communion of the will with God which is the essence of prayer and one of the chief channels through which the Holy Spirit trains us in divine knowledge.

Again, taking prayer in its more restricted sense of actually talking to God, we can understand how by it our knowledge of God can be enormously deepened and extended. We get to know our friends better by conversation and familiar intercourse. And so we shall get to know God better by conversing with Him. But we are very apt to forget that, if conversation is to do this work, it must not be one-sided, and our ordinary conversation with God is terribly one-sided. We insist on doing all the talking ourselves; we go straight through our prayers, almost without drawing breath, and then get up and go away, without leaving a moment to God in which He may talk to us. It is no wonder that such prayers do not much advance our knowledge of Him to whom we speak and to whom we refuse to listen. We must make pauses in our prayers, during which we wait for God's answer to come, whether it be in the form of reproof or comfort or instruction; whether it come as illumination to the mind or strength and courage to the heart. If we would only *converse* humbly and modestly with God, instead of merely giving Him detailed information of things which He knows already, prayer would be a far more effective agent in divine knowledge than we find it to be at present.

In particular, our knowledge of God would become more *personal*. We should go away with a knowledge of Him in His personal nature, as revealed in what He speaks to our soul ; and with an experience of His power and readiness to satisfy our personal needs and aspirations.

If, then, His Holy Spirit is to teach us the knowledge of God, He will do this not only by His direct action on our receptive hearts and attentive wills, but also by helping us in our conversation with God, fashioning our words and uttering our aspirations, and then bringing the divine response out of these "deep things of God" which He searches and makes accessible to us.

CHAPTER XVII

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

RELIGIOUS knowledge is formed by two factors, an objective and a subjective one, which we have described comprehensively as faith and experience. The more completely these elements are fused together, the higher and better becomes our knowledge of God. If no process of fusion takes place in a man's own soul, but he accepts his religion ready-made from the consent of the faithful backed by authority, such acceptance cannot properly be described as religious knowledge at all. It represents the earliest stage of education, in which facts are taken entirely on trust ; if knowledge is to ensue, they must be verified progressively by the discipline of life and reason. And, again, when religious knowledge is thus formed, it is strengthened and stimulated very considerably by Church fellowship and the companionship of the faithful. But the corporate belief of a multitude tends inevitably towards sensational, exaggerated, and stereotyped conceptions which have to be corrected in the testing-tube of spiritual experience and subjected to the cold water of intellectual criticism.

But the individual is not left to himself and his own private guessings at truth.

For, apart from the encouragement of Church fellowship, we have seen that the formation of his religious knowledge is largely a work of the Holy Spirit, with whom the man co-operates by his own efforts at spiritual prayer. And now we have to consider another way in which the Holy Spirit helps us to knowledge of God.

To begin with, we may remind ourselves that man's primitive instinct of religion was sacramental; religion was felt to consist in communion with God through sacrifice. And in this religion very little importance was attached to definite belief; the ritual practice was what mattered. "Antique religions had for the most part no creed: they consisted entirely of institutions and practices. No doubt men will not habitually follow certain practices without attaching a meaning to them; but as a rule we find that, while the practice was rigorously fixed, the meaning attached to it was extremely vague, and the same rite was explained by different people in different ways, without any question of orthodoxy or heterodoxy arising in consequence."¹

Of course, a creed could not be permanently dispensed with; religion had to be formulated intellectually; the conception of the way in which man held communion with God had to be purified from crude animalistic associations and based on a consistent theology. But there is no doubt that the intellectual reaction went too far; the creed was amplified and elongated into a philosophy of the universe, and

¹ Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 16.

religious knowledge came to be identified with the championship of such a philosophy instead of being regarded as an *intelligent or conscious communion with God*.

The Sacraments of the Christian Church are of enormous value in reiterating the truth that communion with God is the essence of religion ; that a creed is merely an assistance, though an indispensable assistance, towards this communion ; and that the communion itself is a most important factor in the deepest and most spiritual creed.

The last of these truths is what we want to emphasize now. How does the Holy Eucharist, as the appointed vehicle of communion, assist our knowledge of God ?

The answer lies embedded in the general principle that knowledge of God must always come through God's revelation of Himself, not through speculative wisdom or insight of our own. And God gives this revelation in two ways ; first, through symbols and pictures, and, secondly, through the fact of a divine life lived under human conditions. The incarnate Christ revealed God in both ways, by His teaching and by His life. Both modes of revelation are continued and perpetuated through the work of the Holy Spirit ; the teaching of Christ, in the theology and philosophy, the unchanging theology and the progressive philosophy, of the Church ; the life of Christ in the Sacraments of the Church. Christ revealed God as much by His life as by His teaching ; by *being* God incarnate as much as by the human words which *spoke* of God ; by the character which manifested His inherent deity as much as by the doctrine

which expounded it. And just as His incarnate life revealed God to receptive souls by all kinds of mysterious and impalpable influences, so His sacramental life in believers reveals God to them, and gives them a knowledge of God through spiritual experience of His presence. Baptism, which makes a child a member of Christ, thereby sows in him the germ of faith, which will afterwards grow into a consciousness of a spiritual life and spiritual power. And the Eucharist feeds this life and develops these powers, and bears witness to Christ as their source and essence. Thus the teaching imparted by the Sacraments corresponds to the revealing influences of Christ's life and character upon the disciples, whilst the teaching imparted in the Creeds corresponds to His doctrine of God given in parables and pictures. And the religious knowledge given by the Sacraments is none the less real, rather it is all the more real, because it exists in the profoundest region of spiritual experience and cannot be even approximately expressed in words. This knowledge consists in the recognition and use of a spiritual endowment, a recognition of it as given from above, and a use of it which merges it more and more with the spirit and personality of the user, and thereby makes it increasingly difficult for him to disentangle it from himself, hold it at arm's-length, and discourse upon it. We know it, first, by the power it exerts upon us ; and then, more intimately and inexpressibly, as part of our own life and self. It is the same, in this respect, with good and evil. Just as an evil power first enslaves a man to itself and then becomes so closely identified with him that (as in the Gospel

narrative) it speaks with the man's own voice, so this life of Christ, communicated in the Sacraments, first helps and strengthens a man, and then, as a further consummation of that beneficent work, merges itself in his receptive and loving heart, so that he knows *it* only in and through the uplifting and transformation of himself.

This is well illustrated by the words of Plotinus, the "passionate pilgrim" of Greek thought in the quest of reality: "A thing may be real," he tells us, "and we may be aware of its presence in us, without being able to give an account of it. In cases of inspiration or possession men know that there is in them something greater than themselves, but they do not know what it is and can only speak of it from its effects upon them."¹ And, in another place, "A man may possess a thing without realizing that he possesses it; in fact, he may possess it more securely than if he understood this. For, if he understood that he possessed it, he would possess it as something different from itself; but, not understanding this, it may be that he *is* what he possesses."²

Thus the knowledge of God imparted by the Sacraments to a faithful recipient is essentially the awareness of a divine presence, which is himself and not himself, which strengthens and transforms him, knitting him into oneness with itself, whilst all the time he is conscious that it infinitely transcends him. And so it comes about that the deepest spiritual life is also the profoundest spiritual knowledge. "The life was the light of men"; the sacramental life of

¹ Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5, 3, § 14, p. 512 a.

² κινδυνεύει εἶναι ὃ ἔχει, *Enn.* 4, 4, § 4, p. 399 b.

Christ in the soul is itself our knowledge of Him who dwells there; and it is the truest and most spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of direct experience.

And there is an important corollary to this.

The Sacrament bears witness to itself, or rather to Christ, who is the "res sacramenti." It is by receiving Him there that we come to know the meaning and virtue of the Sacrament. If we are wise, we shall let Him reveal Himself by His presence, instead of anticipating His revelation by much dogmatism prior to our reception of Him. His indwelling life will teach us more of the sacramental system than all the handbooks and catechisms that have ever been invented.

Dr. Headlam expresses this admirably when he writes: "What our Lord said was not, This believe in remembrance of Me, but, This do in remembrance of Me. What the Church therefore has to do is rightly to fulfil the commands of its Master, and to celebrate the Eucharist as He celebrated the Last Supper in all essential features. And that is what it has done through the long period of its history. The essential elements, either in Baptism or the Eucharist, are the fulfilment of the command of Jesus and the use of the words which He Himself used. If we do that, then the rite itself will always teach people as it taught them in the days of the early Church."¹

Let us train the children to devout and loyal obedience to Christ's precept, and teach them to take

¹ *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1910, p. 60.

real trouble about their preparation and their thanksgiving; then the Sacrament will teach them about itself and Him who instituted it, since the Sacrament is Christ living and working in their souls, and thereby manifesting Himself to them.

The spiritual life, wrought in us by the Sacrament, is thus religious knowledge from the side of experience; it is the possession of Christ, or the being possessed by Him, in the profoundest depths of our being. Sacramental spiritual life makes us know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,¹ as it fills us with the fullness of God. And at the same time faith goes hand in hand with experience, as we pray with S. Thomas that "Him whom we now purpose to receive beneath a veil, we may at last behold with unveiled face"; as with S. Paul we look forward to something "far better" than is possible for us here: to "be with Christ," to "know Him as we are known," to "see Him face to face."

¹ Eph. iii. 19.

CHAPTER XVIII

RESULTS

AT the close of our analysis it may be well shortly to gather up the results to which we have been led. The original source of all religious knowledge is our instinctive desire for God, in whose image man believes himself to have been formed, a primitive desire which claims recognition for itself amongst the other desires, instincts, and impulses of his nature.

This primitive God-ward impulse expresses itself in action ; in ritual practices which encase themselves in institutions and traditions without attempting to give an intellectual account of themselves. And the typical rite on which this dim primeval experience centres is sacrificial communion with a god who is vaguely conceived as the totem of the community, with features derived impartially from animals, trees, and men.

When reflection comes, much that belongs to these rites and to the myths which subsequently gather round them is seen to be irrelevant, crude, and unworthy of the developing idea of God. Thus reason makes its first explicit appearance in the form

of criticism; and such rational criticism is faith making itself felt, and preparing the way for a coherent, intelligent, spiritual conception of God's nature.

In this early stage then, we recognize the blind action of the religious instinct, working without a rational belief, and followed by a reaction on the part of the critical, inquiring intellect, which is the attempt of faith to purify the idea of God and to justify religious action at the bar of reason.

2. Then we considered the constructive action of faith, which soars to God as the Eternal Mind in which all human ideals are perfectly realized; the Eternal Mind from which human minds have their origin, whether by emanation or creation, and also, through their affinity with Him, their assurance of immortality. This aspiration of faith is seen most clearly in Platonism, partly in Plato himself, partly, and in some respects more fully, in Plotinus. The defect of it, at any rate in its Platonic presentment, is that such faith is too exclusively intellectualist; it ignores its own origin in a natural desire, and, instead of attempting to educate and develop the instincts and emotions, attempts to destroy them altogether as something inferior, a mere obstacle to the upward flight of reason. It tends to disparage religious practice as a trade in which God and man do business with each other,¹ and to regard sacrifice as an unworthy attempt to curry favour with God and to blind His eyes with a gift; evil is in its eyes identical with ignorance, and is to be remedied

¹ E.g. in the *Euthydemus* of Plato.

not by God's forgiveness, but by man's advance in knowledge.

Here, then, we have an example of faith divorced from experience, issuing in metaphysical speculation instead of religious knowledge.

3. Passing to Christianity, we recognized at once that, at any rate, both factors of religious knowledge are here present, and that their equal co-operation is insisted upon. The basis of Christianity is faith in Christ and acceptance of the teaching given in His life and doctrine ; and this faith is to be brought at once into union with religious practice and with the emotions and affections of the heart. We maintained that this faith expressed in the Creed is a reasonable one, translating into conceptual language the teaching of One whom we accept as God incarnate ; and that one of its credentials is the fact that it reasserts those ideas of sacrifice, communion, and atonement which man's primitive instinct had fastened on as the ground-truths of religion, and unites them in their purified and spiritual form with a belief in Christ as the Eternal Word in which the fullness of wisdom and knowledge dwell. In this way experience and faith are brought together, each supplying what the other lacks.

4. And in view of the ever-renewed tendency on the part of faith to intellectualize itself into a system of universal information, we drew a distinction between a "theology" which does not go beyond the doctrine, essentially practical and spiritual, of Christ and His Apostles, and a "philosophy" which tries to give Christianity its context in some general theory of

the universe. Theology is permanent, and infallible with the infallibility of Christ's own intuition of God ; philosophy must, and ought to, vary with every change and advance of culture and science through the ages.

As a factor of religious knowledge, it is essential that faith should at once be fused with experience, rather than extend itself indefinitely on the purely intellectual plane. Faith is to be the lantern illuminating the instinct of God together with the other instincts, impulses, and aspirations which make up the affective and volitional part of our nature, and may be called the raw material of experience. Experience enlightened by faith becomes experience of God ; and this experience is religious knowledge viewed from the side of the affections and the will.

And then there is the corresponding influence of experience on faith, when the individual temperament, the racial instincts, the moral endeavour, all inspired at first by faith, in their turn react upon it and make it a vital personal force.

5. Then we had to inquire what contribution is made to religious knowledge by authority which ratifies and enforces the consent of the faithful. And we saw that the acceptance of truth on authority is not strictly knowledge at all, but rather a preliminary act of trustful faith which requires to be tested, spiritually by experience and intellectually by criticism. And we pointed out shortly some of the services rendered by the latter.

6. Then, reverting to the supernatural character of religious knowledge, we referred to the work of the

Holy Spirit, as indicated by S. Paul, in the production of that spiritual life which is the meeting-point of faith and experience as they grow to maturity; and the importance of prayer as the attitude of receptivity to His work.

And, in the same connexion, we insisted on the contribution of the Sacraments, and argued that the presence of Christ in the soul, mediated by the Holy Eucharist, yields the deepest and most spiritual kind of religious knowledge. This knowledge is the experience of a power, divine and yet our own, which uplifts and transforms us, and which is seized upon by faith as a pledge and promise of perfected knowledge hereafter.

Religious knowledge is a subtle and complex thing, due to the delicate interaction of a variety of forces. It rests on faith; but it is not identical with intellectual assent; it is not at all the same as controversy or argument, and is different again from a system of philosophy.

It rests, too, on feeling and volition; but it is quite different from artistic or cosmic emotion, and quite different, again, from modern civilization and its "morality." Directly the intellect becomes too prominent, it has to be set to work to educate the heart, and thereby to educate itself. The objective and the subjective, faith and experience, the intellect and the heart, label them as we will, those are the two distinct factors of religious knowledge. They interact at every stage; each helps and is helped by the other, and both are helped by the Holy Ghost; the connexion between them grows closer and closer,

till at last, as they are fused more perfectly into one, the joins and seams disappear, and religious knowledge emerges as an indivisible thing. In its highest, ultimate form it is a reasonable love of God ; a consciousness of the possession of eternal life, which is the gift of God through Christ, and which, if we make a loving and intelligent use of it, will grow into its full perfection in the presence of Him who at the beginning planted the germ of it in our hearts.

APPENDIX

NOTE TO CHAPTER V.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

I had written this book before reading Henri Bergson's *Evolution Créatrice*, with its illuminating distinction between Intuition and Intellect. I feel very deeply the value and significance of this distinction; and I cannot help thinking that, if Professor Sanday wishes to illustrate the doctrine of the Incarnation from modern thought (see *Christologies Ancient and Modern*), he will find more help in Bergson's philosophy than in theories of the sub-conscious. For, whilst both make their appeal to the sphere of the instinctive and non-intellectual, Bergson's Intuition is presented to us as definitely supra-intellectual, supra-scientific, and, indeed, as supra-human, as far as any substantial achievement goes; whereas sub-conscious activity is part, and perhaps not the highest part, of ordinary human nature. The presentation of Intuition, or insight into the highest truth, alongside of the intellect, which is blind to that truth, certainly yields a very suggestive analogy for Christian thought. And, conversely, the triumphant progress of free, creative energy (of which Intuition gives us fugitive glimpses) can probably be envisaged by us with fewest contradictions and in the highest degree of persuasiveness, if we think of it as a divine life, mingling in

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